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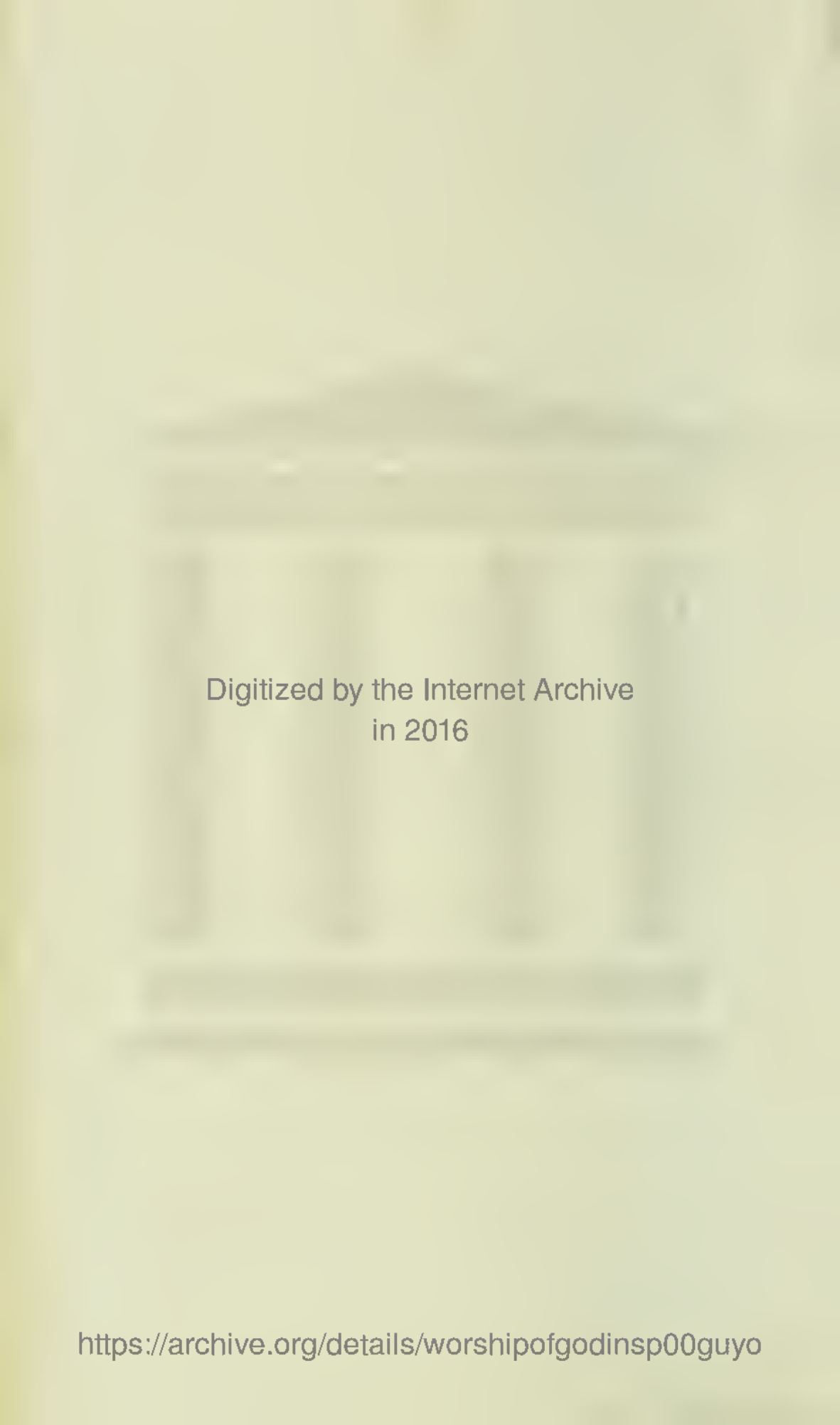
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John C. Foster
1890.

THE

Worſhip of GOD,

IN

Spirit and in Truth:

OR, A

Short and eaſy Method of Prayer,

Suited to *every* Capacity;

With Two Letters upon the ſame Subject.

By Madam GUION.

To which is added,

TWO LETTERS,

Concerning a Life truly Chriſtian;

And a DISCOURSE upon the *univerſal* Love and Goodneſs of God to Mankind, in and through Jeſus Chriſt.

Extracted from Two late Authors.

BRISTOL:

Printed by W. PINE, for T. MILLS, Bookſeller, in Wine-Street, 1775.

TR R.
G989W

THE
Author's PREFACE.

A *Great many persons have fancied* Prayer *and* Devotion *to be things so very frightful and extraordinary, that they thought it was but in vain to labour to acquire them, despairing ever to be able to compass them. But as the* difficulty *which one apprehends to be in any thing maketh him despair of being able to succeed in it, and at the same time slisleth his desire of undertaking it; so on the other hand, when one proposes to himself a thing as advantageous, and which is easy to be obtained, he sets about it with pleasure, and carries it on with resolution: this is what hath obliged us to discover both the advantage and facility of this method. O! were we but perswaded of the* infinite goodness of God *toward his poor creatures, and of the desire that he hath to communicate himself to them, we should not apprehend*

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such difficulties, neither should we so easily despair to obtain a good *which he desireth so earnestly to give us.*

After that he hath given us his only Son, and delivered him to the death for us. Rom. viii. 32. *How can he refuse us any thing else? No surely: We want but a little* courage and perseverance. *We have so much of both for our little temporal interests, and yet almost none at all left for the* one thing necessary, Luke x. 42.

I am willing that such as have difficulty to believe, that 'tis easy to find God in this manner, do not believe what is here told them: but let them make the experiment of it, and then let them judge for themselves, and they shall see that there is but very little told them, in comparison of what the thing really is. Read therefore, dearest reader, this small Treatise with a simple and sincere heart, with childlike littleness and humility of spirit, and you'll find very much good by it. Receive it with the same spirit that we give it you, which is no other but to carry you wholly to God without reserve. Our design is

to

to encourage the ſimple and the little ones to go to their father who loveth their humble confidence, and whom diſtruſt very much diſpleaſeth. Seek not for any thing in it but the love of God, and retain always a ſincere deſire of your ſalvation, and ye ſhall certainly find it.

We don't at all pretend to raiſe our opinion above that of others, but we ſincerely declare the experience we have had, both in ourſelves and others, of the advantage that there is to be found in the uſe of this plain and ſimple manner of going to God. If we paſs by ſeveral things which are eſteemed, and ſpeak only of the ſhort and eaſy method of prayer, *it is becauſe the treatiſe being intended only for this, it can't ſo well treat of any thing elſe.*

It is certain that whoſoever reads it in the ſame ſpirit in which it was written, will find nothing that's ſhocking or uneaſy; they will be farther confirmed in the truth which it contains, would they but make a competent trial of it.

It belongeth to thee, O bleſſed JESUS! who loveſt ſimplicity, and who

takeſt thy delights in being with the children of men, Prov. viii. 31, *that is, with thoſe amongſt men, who are truly willing to become children: it belongeth to thee, I ſay, to give the due value and eſteem to this little work, by imprinting it on the heart, and inclining thoſe who ſhall read it, to ſeek thee in their heart where thou deſireſt to receive the marks of their love, and to give them the teſtimonies of thine. They deprive themſelves of theſe good things by their own fault. It is thy work, O thou God of love! O thou ſilent WORD! 'tis thy work to make thyſelf to be beloved, taſted, and heard. Thou canſt do it, and I am confident thou wilt do it to the ſoul that gives itſelf up to thee.*

Glory be to thy name for ever.

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ERRATA.

Page 131, read after he addeth, that *the perſon whoſe works ſhall be found fit to be burnt, ſhall be ſaved; yet ſo as by fire.*

N. B. The PUBLISHER is ſenſible that there are ſeveral other errors of the preſs, as well as in the punctuation, which he is perſuaded the Reader's good ſenſe will correct and candor pardon.

☞ Madam Guion's enemies made her *Short and Eaſy Method of Prayer*, a pretext for her PERSECUTION, IMPRISONMENT, and EXILE. Vide ſupplement to Lady Guion's Life, page 269, and her Letters, No. 158, 159, &c. publiſhed with the *Diſſertation* on PURE LOVE, written by the ARCHBISHOP of CAMBRAY.

A

Short and Easy Method

OF

PRAYER.

Sect. I.

That all have ability to pray.

ALL men are capable of *prayer*; and therefore 'tis a dreadful unhappineſs that generally all perſons almoſt do imagine that they are not called to prayer. But we are all called to prayer, like as we are all called to ſalvation.

Prayer

Prayer is no other thing but the *application of the heart to God*, and the *inward exerciſe of love*. St. *Paul* enjoins us to *pray without ceaſing* 1 Theſſ. v. 17. And our Lord ſaith *I ſay unto you all, watch and pray.* Mark xiii. 33, 37. All then may pray, and all ought to pray. But I confeſs, all cannot meditate, and that but very few are fitted for it. So it is not this prayer of meditation which God requires, nor which we deſire of you, my deareſt brethren, whoſoever you be that would be ſaved. Come ye therefore every one to pray; ye ought to live by prayer, as ye ought to live by love. *I counſel you to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that you may be rich.* Rev. iii. 18. It is moſt eaſy for you to obtain it, yea, more than you can imagine. *Come all ye that are athirſt unto theſe living waters; and don't amuſe yourſelves to hew out broken*

broken ciſterns that can hold no water. Jo. vii. 37. Jer. ii. 13. Come all ye hungry hearts, which find not any thing that can content you, and you ſhall be fully ſatisfied. Come ye poor afflicted ones, ye who are oppreſſed with trouble and ſorrows, and ye ſhall be comforted. Come ye that are ſick to your Phyſician, and fear not to approach him becauſe you are weighed down with maladies: lay open to him all your diſeaſes, and ye ſhall be relieved. Come ye children to your Father, and he will receive you with the arms of love Come ye poor wandring and ſtrag-. ling ſheep, draw nigh to your Shepherd. Come ye ſinners near to your Saviour. Come ye dull and ignorant ones, ye are all fit for prayer, even ye who think yourſelves incapable thereof, are moſt of all fitted for it. Come all of you

without

without exception, Jeſus Chriſt calleth you all. Yet let not thoſe who are without an heart come, for they only are diſpens'd from coming; for there muſt be an heart to love. But who is without an heart? O come then and give this heart unto God; and learn the manner of doing it. All who are willing to pray can eaſily do it with the aſſiſtance of the ordinary graces, and of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, which are common to all Chriſtians.

Prayer is the key to ſupreme happineſs. It is the effectual means of delivering us from all vices, and of acquiring all virtues: for the great means of becoming perfect, is to walk in the preſence of God. This he ſaid himſelf, *Walk in my preſence, and be perfect.* Gen. xvii. 1. 'Tis prayer alone that can give you this preſence, and that can give it you continually.

Therefore

Therefore you muſt learn a kind of prayer which can be made at all times, which doth not divert from outward buſineſs, and which princes, kings, prelates, prieſts, magiſtrates, ſoldiers, children and labourers, women and ſick perſons, may all perform. This is not the prayer of the head, but the prayer of the heart. It is not a prayer of thought only, becauſe the ſpirit of man is ſo bounded, that while he thinks on one thing, he can't think on another; but it is the prayer of the heart, which is not at all interrupted by all the occupations of the mind: nothing but irregular affections can interrupt the prayer of the heart; and 'tis almoſt impoſſible for the ſoul which has once taſted God, and the ſweetneſs of his love, to reliſh any thing elſe but him.

There's nothing more eaſy, than

to

to have God, and to taſte (or delight in) him. He is more in us than we ourſelves. He deſires more to give himſelf to us, than we do to poſſeſs him. All conſiſts in the right manner of ſeeking him, which yet is ſo eaſy and ſo natural, that the very air which we breathe is not more ſo. And even you who think yourſelves ſo dull, as that you are not good for any thing; you (I ſay) may live by prayer, and upon God himſelf, as eaſily and as continually as ye live by the air which you breathe. Shall ye not then be highly criminal if ye don't do it? But doubtleſs ye will do it when ye ſhall have learned the way, which is indeed the the eaſieſt that can be.

Sect II.

Of the right Manner of Prayer.

THERE are two ways of introducing ſouls into prayer, which they may and ought to uſe for a certain time. The one is, *Meditation*; the other is, *Meditation upon Reading*.

Meditation upon Reading is nothing elſe, but to take ſome weighty truths, which afford matter both for ſpeculation and practice; but eſpecially for the latter, and to proceed in this manner. *Firſt*, You ſhall take the truth, ſuch as you are pleaſed to chuſe, and read two or three lines of it in order, that you may taſte and digeſt them, endeavouring to draw out the juice

or ſubſtance of them, and to *keep fix'd to the place* which you read, *ſo long as you find any reliſh* in it, not paſſing further till that place become inſipid unto you.

Then you muſt take as much more, and do juſt the ſame, not reading above half a page at a time: for it is not ſo much the quantity of reading that is profitable, as the manner of reading. Hence thoſe who run apace cannot improve by what they read, any more than the bees can draw out the juice of the flowers by flying over them, without reſting upon them. To read much, ſerves more for ſchool-learning than for ſpiritual knowledge: but to profit really by ſpiritual books, they muſt be read in the manner above expreſs'd; and I'm ſure, that if any did ſo, they would by reading gradually accuſtom themſelves

to

to prayer, and become very much disposed for it.

The other (help to prayer) is, *Meditation*, which is performed in a season set apart for it, and not in the time of reading. I think it might be good to enter upon it in this manner. After having placed yourself in the presence of God. by an act of faith, you must read something that's substantial, and stop gently upon it; not that you may reason, but only to fix your mind; remembering that the principal exercise ought to be the presence of God, and that the subject should serve more to stay your mind than to employ your reason. A firm belief of God being present in the ground of our hearts, must needs engage us to sink down into ourselves, gathering all the thoughts inward, and hindering them

from being ſcattered abroad; which is a powerful means of ridding us from a multitude of diſtractions, and of removing us far from outward objects, that we may approach unto God, who cannot be found but in the inward ground of ourſelves, and in our centre, which is the *Holy of Holies*, where he dwells. Yea, he promiſes that *if any man do his will, he will come unto him and make his abode in him.* Jo. xiv. 23. St. *Auſtin* accuſes himſelf for the time which he had loſt, in not having at firſt ſought God after this manner.

When therefore any one is thus ſunk and introverted into himſelf, and throughly penetrated with a living ſenſe of the divine preſence in his inward ground; when the thoughts are all gathered up and retir'd from the circumference to the

the centre; which indeed is somewhat painful in the beginning, but afterwards becomes most easy, as I shall shew you hereafter. When I say, the soul is thus recollected into itself, and when it is employed sweetly and gently about the truth it hath read, not in reasoning much upon it, but in savouring and tasting it, and in exciting the will by affection, rather than in applying the understanding by consideration: the affection being thus stirred up, we must leave it to rest sweetly and in peace, that it may swallow down what it has tasted: for suppose one should but chew an excellent bit, and indeed relish it, yet if he did not forbear a little this motion, so as to swallow it down, he could not be nourished by it. So in like manner, when the affection is moved, if we would go on to move it still, we

ſhould extinguiſh its fire, and thereby deprive the ſoul of its food; and therefore it muſt neceſſarily ſwallow down what it hath chew'd and taſted, by a little repoſe full of reſpect and confidence. This method is moſt neceſſary, and would advance a ſoul more in a little while, than any other is capable of doing in ſeveral years.

But as I have hinted, the principal exerciſe ought always to be the view of the divine preſence: this alſo we ought to perform in the moſt faithful manner we can: to call in our thoughts whenſoever they begin to wander. This is a ſhort and effectual way to combat all diſtractions, becauſe if any would oppoſe them directly, they but irritate and encreaſe them, whereas by ſinking down in the view and faith of the divine preſence, and ſimply recollecting ourſelves,

ſelves, we combat them indirectly, and without thinking of them, though in a moſt powerful manner.

I likewiſe admoniſh all beginners not to run from one truth to another, or from one ſubject to another; but to hold by one and the ſame ſo long as they find any reliſh in it. This is the way quickly to enter and penetrate into the truths propoſed, to taſte them, and to have them imprinted upon us.

I ſaid, 'tis difficult in the beginning for one to recollect himſelf, becauſe of the habit that the ſoul has gotten to be wholly without in things relating to the body; but when 'tis a little accuſtom'd to recollection by the violence which it has done to itſelf, this becomes mighty eaſy unto it; not only becauſe it acquires this habit, but alſo becauſe God, who ſeeks to communicate himſelf to his creature, ſends it ſuch abundant graces and ſuch

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an experimental taſte of his preſence, as render it moſt eaſy and delightful.

Sect III.

For thoſe who cannot read.

THOSE who cannot read, are not hereby depriv'd of (the benefit of) prayer. JESUS CHRIST is the great book written without and within, which will teach them all things.

They ought to take this method: firſt, They muſt learn this fundamental truth, that *the kingdom of God is within them*; Luke xvii. 21. and that there it muſt be ſought.

They who have the care of ſouls ought to teach their people to pray, even

even as they teach them the catechiſm. They teach them the *end* for which they were created, but they don't ſufficiently inſtruct them how to come to the *enjoyment* of this end. I could wiſh they would teach it them in this manner : namely, that they ought to begin by a profound act of adoration, and of ſelf-abaſement before God, and therewith ſhutting their bodily eyes, endeavour to open thoſe of the ſoul ; then they are to gather it wholly inward, and to exerciſe themſelves directly with the preſence of God, by a lively faith that God is in us; not ſuffering their thoughts and imaginations to wander abroad, but keeping them in captivity and ſubjection as muchas they are able.

Then let them ſay thus the *Lord's Prayer* underſtanding in ſome meaſure what they ſay, and believing that God, who is within their ſoul,

is

is very willing to be their *Father*. Being in this diſpoſition, let them beg their neceſſaries of him, and having pronounced this word FATHER, let them continue ſome moments in ſilence with much reverence, waiting that this their heavenly Father may be pleaſed to diſcover unto them his will.

At other times, the Chriſtian conſidering himſelf as a child that's quite ſpent, and all over filthy through his repeated falls, and who has no power either to ſtand on his legs, or make himſelf clean, let him lay open his ſhameful condition to his father in an humble manner, adding every now and then ſome expreſſions of love and regret, and again remaining in ſilence. Thereafter going on with the *Lord's Prayer*, let him pray this king of Glory to reign in him: giving up himſelf to him indeed, to the end that he may

nay do it, and ſurrendring to him he juſt right which he hath over him.

If he perceive an Inclination to peace and ſilence, he ought not to proceed, but to abide in that ſtate while it laſteth. After which he may go on to the next petition, *viz. Thy will be done in earth as it is done in heaven.* Mat. vi. 10. Whereupon theſe humble ſuppliants are to deſire that God may accompliſh all his will in them and by them: they muſt give their heart and their liberty unto God, that he my diſpoſe thereof at his pleaſure; and ſeeing that the peculiar work of the will ſhould be to love, they muſt deſire to love, and aſk of God his pure love. But this ought to be done in a calm and peaceful manner, and ſo of the reſt of the Lord's-Prayer; which the above-named perſons may very well teach them.

Again,

Again, They may place themſelves as ſheep before their ſhepherd, and aſk of him their true ſubſtantial food. *O divine ſhepherd! Thou feedeſt thy ſheep with thyſelf, and thou art their daily bread.*

They may alſo lay before him the neceſſities of their families: but all muſt be done in this direct and principal view of faith that God is within us.

Whatſoever men figure out or repreſent unto themſelves as God, is not God; a lively faith of his preſence is ſufficient: for we muſt not form any image of God, tho' we may indeed of *Jeſus Chriſt*; beholding him as a child, as crucified, or in any other ſtate or myſtery, provided that the ſoul do always ſeek him in its own centre. Again, We may conſider him as our Phyſician, and preſent unto him our wounds, that from

he may heal them: but ſtill without any effort or violence, and with ſome little ſilence interpoſed from time to time, ſo that the ſilence may be mixed with action; thus by degrees increaſing the ſilence, and leſſening the diſcourſe, until in the end by means of yielding gradually to the operation of God, he may get the aſcendant in us; as we ſhall note hereafter.

When once the preſence of God is given, and the ſoul begins by little and little to reliſh the ſilence and ſtillneſs, this experimental ſenſe of the divine preſence introduceth it into the ſecond degree of prayer; which is attained both by ſuch as can read, and ſuch as cannot, by taking the method above deſcribed; tho' indeed God does favour ſome privileged ſouls with it even from the beginning.

Sect. IV.

Of the Second Degree of Prayer.

THIS we call the prayer of simplicity; for when the soul hath exercised itself for some time, as aforesaid, it feels by degrees that it can recollect itself more easily, and prayer becomes easy, sweet, and delightful; it knows now that this is the way to find *God*, for it feels the savour of his ointments. But then it must alter its method, and see to perform faithfully and couragiously what I am a going to say, without being troubled at what may be alledged concerning it.

First, So soon as the soul recollecteth and placeth itself in the presence of God with faith, let it continue

tinue thus a little in awful silence.

But if from the beginning, it feels some little sense of the divine presence, let it stop there without troubling itself about any thing, or proceeding further; and let it hold what is given it, so long as it lasteth. If this passeth away, then let it stir up its will by some tender affection; and if by the means of the first affection it finds itself placed again in its sweet peace, let it continue therein. We must blow the fire gently, and when it is once kindled, cease to blow it more; for if one should go on to blow still, he would but extinguish it.

I advise above all, that no one may ever conclude his prayer without continuing for some time towards the end in a respectful silence. 'Tis likewise of great importance for the soul to go to prayer with

courage, and that it bring along with it a pure and diſintereſted love: let it not go ſo much to receive any thing from God, as to do his will. For a ſervant who ſerves his maſter only according as he rewards him, is indeed unworthy of any reward at all. Go therefore to prayer, not ſeeking any thing, but only to be as he pleaſeth. This will preſerve in you an evenneſs of ſpirit, and keep you from wondering either at God's repulſes, or your own drineſſes.

Sect. V.

Of Spiritual Dryneſs.

THOUGH God hath no other deſire, but to communicate himſelf to the ſoul that loves and ſeeks

ſeeks him; yet he often hideth himſelf, that he may rouze it from its lazineſs, and oblige it to ſeek after him with love and fidelity. But O! With what bounty doth he reward the faithfulneſs of his beloved ſoul? And how much are his withdrawings followed with divine conſolations! Some are apt to think, that 'tis a greater ſign of fidelity, and argues more of one's love, to ſeek him with the preſſing efforts of the head, and the force of one's own activity; or that theſe will quickly make him return. No: believe me (dear ſouls) this is not at all the conduct of this ſtate of prayer; for 'tis neceſſary, that with a loving patience, a contrite, lowly, and humble regard, a frequent, but peaceable affection, and a reſpectful ſilence, ye wait for the return of your Beloved. You will let him ſee, by this manner of acting, that

'tis him alone, and his good pleasure, that you love, and not the pleasure you may have in loving him. Therefore, *Be not impatient in the times of darkness, suffer the delays and suspensions of the consolations of God: be resigned under every state of mind, and thereby shall the divine life grow and be renewed,* Ecclus. ii. 1, 2, 3.

Be ye always patient in prayer, and though ye should not make any other all your life-time, but to wait in a humble, resign'd and contented spirit, for the return of your Beloved; Oh! you should pray to excellent purpose: in the mean time you might pour out some expressions of love. This way of proceeding doth mightily please God; and more powerfully prevails with him than any other!

Sect. VI.

Of Resignation.

HERE resignation and the entire surrender of ourselves unto God must begin; namely, by being convinced, that whatsoever befals us from one moment to another, and whatsoever we want, is in the order and will of God. This conviction will render us content with every thing, and make us look upon all that happens to us as coming from God, and not from the creature. I earnestly beseech and conjure you my dearest brethren, whosoever you be that are willing indeed to give yourselves unto God, never to take back yourselves again, when ye have once given yourselves to him;

him; but believe, that a thing which is given away, is no more at your diſpoſal.

Reſignation is that which is of the greateſt conſequence in the whole Chriſtian path: nay, 'tis the key of the whole ſpiritual life. Whoſoever doth fully reſign himſelf, ſhall in a ſhort time become perfectly united unto Chriſt. We muſt therefore keep firmly to reſignation, without attending to reaſoning ſuggeſtions. A great faith makes a great reſignation: we ought to commit ourſelves unto God, *Hoping againſt all hope*, Rom. iv. 18.

Reſignation is a putting off all care of ourſelves, that we may leave all that concerns us entirely to the conduct of God. All Chriſtians are exhorted thus to forſake and reſign themſelves; for our Lord ſaid unto all in general,

Matt.

Matt. vi. 25. *Take ye no thought for the morrow: for your heavenly Father knoweth what ye ſtand in need of.* Prov. iii. 6. *Think on him in all thy ways, and he will direct thy paths.* Ch. xvi. 3. *Commit thy ways unto the Lord, aud he will eſtabliſh thy thoughts.* Again, Pſalm xxxvii. 5. *Commit thy whole way unto the Lord: truſt alſo in him, and he himſelf will do it.*

Our reſignation then ought to be an entire forſaking and abandoning our all unto God, both with reſpect to time and eternity forgetting ourſelves in a great meaſure, and thinking on God only: by this means the heart remains always free, contented, and diſengaged.

As to the practice of this virtue, it conſiſts in a continual forſaking and loſing all ſelf-will in the will of God; in renouncing all particular inclinations, how good ſoever they may

ſeem to be, as ſoon as we feel them ariſe in us, that we may always ſtand in the indifference, willing only what God hath willed, and be indifferent as to all things that regard either the body or the ſoul, temporal or eternal goods; forgetting what is paſt, giving up the time preſent unto God, and leaving to his providence that which is to come; being contented with what happens every moment, ſeeing it brings along with it the eternal order of God concerning us, and which is a declaration of his will; not attributing any thing that befals us to the creature, but beholding all things in God, and conſidering them as coming infallibly from his hand, our own ſin only excepted.

Suffer yourſelves therefore to be governed by God, as it ſhall pleaſe him, both with reſpect

ſpect to your outward and inward ſtate.

Sect. VII.

Of Sufferings.

BE content to ſuffer whatſoever God ſhall ſee fit to lay upon you. If you love him purely, you will in this life ſeek him, as much on mount *Calvary*, as upon *Tabor*.

You muſt love him (I ſay) as much upon *Calvary* as *Tabor*, ſince that is the place where he diſcovers the moſt of his love.

Do not like to thoſe Perſons who give themſelves unto him at one time, and take themſelves back again at another. They give themſelves up to be careſſed, but they draw back

back themselves again when they are crucified, or at least go to seek for their consolation in the creature.

No, no, (dear souls) you will never find true consolation, but in the love of the cross, and an entire resignation of your wills. *He that hath no relish of the cross, savoureth not the things that be of God!* Matt. xvi. 23. 'Tis impossible to love *God* without loving the cross; and indeed a heart which hath the relish of the cross, findeth even the most bitter things to be sweet, pleasant and delightful. *The hungry soul findeth bitter things sweet,* Prov. xxvii. 7. Because the more it hungers after God, the more doth it hunger after the cross. The cross bringeth the soul to God, and God giveth the cross to purify the soul.

The great sign of the internal ad-

advancement is, if one advanceth in the croſs. Reſignation and the croſs go hand in hand together.

Whenſoever any thing occurs to which you feel a repugnancy reſign yourſelves immediately to God with reſpect to this very thing, and give up yourſelves as a ſacrifice unto him; then ye ſhall ſee that when the croſs cometh, it will not be ſo very heavy, becauſe ye have willingly accepted it. Which notwithſtanding will not keep you from feeling the weight of it; as ſome imagine, that the feeling the croſs is not to ſuffer: for to feel ſuffering is one of the principal parts of ſuffering itſelf. Jeſus Chriſt choſe to ſuffer the utmoſt ſharpneſs of ſufferings. We often bear the croſs in weakneſs, at other times with

ſtrength: all ought to be equal to us in the will of God.

Sect. VIII.

Of the Myſteries of our Redemption through *Jeſus Chriſt*.

SOME may object unto me, that at this rate one cannot have any ſenſe of the *myſteries* impreſſed upon him: but 'tis quite otherwiſe, for theſe are given in reality to the ſoul. *Jeſus Chriſt* to whom we reſign ourſelves, and whom we follow as *the way*, whom we hear as *the truth*, and who animateth us as *the life*, Jo. xiv. 6. Uniting himſelf to the ſoul, makes it to bear all his ſeveral ſtates. Now to *bear* the ſtates or conditions of *Jeſus Chriſt*, is a far greater thing than barely

barely to *conſider* the ſtates of *Jeſus Chriſt.* St. *Paul* did bear in his body the ſtates of *Jeſus Chriſt. I bear* (ſaith he) *in my body the marks of the Lord Jeſus;* Gal. vi. 17. but he does not ſay that he reaſoned upon them.

In this ſtate of reſignation, *Jeſus Chriſt* often giveth us ſome views of his ſtates after a very particular manner. Then it behoveth us to receive them, and to ſuffer our minds to be applied to any thing that pleaſeth him; taking equally all the diſpoſitions that he ſhall ſee fit to place us in, not chuſing any one of ourſelves but only this, of continuing always with him, of affectionately deſiring him, and of giving up ourſelves entirely to him; receiving with an evenneſs of mind all that he doth give us, whether light or darkneſs, fruitfulneſs or barrenneſs, ſtrength or weakneſs,

weakneſs, ſweetneſs, or bitterneſs, temptation, pains, troubles, or doubtings; nothing of all theſe ſhould ſtop us. There are ſome perſons whom God doth apply for the ſpace of whole years to a feeling ſenſe of ſome one or other of theſe myſteries. The ſimple view or thought of ſuch a myſtery, gathers them inwards; therefore they ought to be faithful to it: but when God removes it from them, then let them willingly be deprived of it. There be others who are troubled becauſe they cannot think of any one myſtery; but this is without reaſon, ſeeing that the affectionate attention of the mind to God, includeth all particular devotion: and whoſoever is united to God alone by finding his reſt in him, is indeed applied to all the myſteries in a more excellent manner. He that

that loves God, loveth every thing that proceedeth from him.

Sect. IX.

Of Virtue.

THIS is the ſhort and certain way to acquire virtue; becauſe God, being the principle of all virtue, to poſſeſs him is indeed to poſſeſs all virtue; and the nearer we approach unto this poſſeſſion, the more we have of virtue in an eminent degree. Again, I ſay, that all virtue which is not given from within is but a maſk of virtue and is like a garment which is put on or off at pleaſure. But the virtue that is communicated from within is the only true eſſential and permanent virtue: *The beauty of the king's daughter cometh from within*; Pſ. 44. 13, vulg. and of all people there

there are none who practiſe it more vigorouſly than theſe, tho' they do not think of the virtue in particular. For God, to whom they keep themſelves united, makes them to perform it in all its kinds. O what hunger have theſe devout ſouls after ſufferings! They think only on what may pleaſe their beloved, and ſo they begin to neglect themſelves and contemn themſelves: the more they love their God, the more do they hate themſelves and diſreliſh the creatures. O if men could but learn this moſt eaſy method, which is fitted for every one, for the dull and ignorant as well as the learned, how eaſily would the whole church of God be reformed! There needs no more but to love. *Love* (ſaith St. *Auſtin*) *and do then what ye will.* For when we love indeed, we cannot will any thing that may diſ-

pleaſe

pleaſe our beloved. *God is love, and he that abideth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.* 1 John iv. 16.

Sect. X.

Of Mortification.

I Say further, that 'tis next to impoſſible for one ever to arrive at the perfect mortification of his ſenſes and paſſions by any other way than the love of God. The reaſon is very plain, for it is the ſoul that gives life and vigour to the ſenſes; and likewiſe the ſenſes which irritate and raiſe the paſſions. A dead man hath no more any ſenſe or paſſion left in him becauſe of the ſeparation which is made betwixt the ſoul and the ſenſes. All the labour which is done

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in the outward part carries ſtill the ſoul more outwardly into the things to which it doth apply itſelf more ſtrongly. It is in theſe things, that it exerts itſelf moſt: as for example: being applied directly to ſtrictneſs and rigour in externals, it is wholly turned that way, and thereby invigorates the ſenſes inſtead of mortifying them. For it is only from the application of the ſoul that the ſenſes can draw any thing of force or vigour, and the more the ſoul is in them, the more doth it ſtill enliven them. This life of ſenſe doth move and provoke the paſſions, ſo far is it from extinguiſhing them. Auſteries may well weaken the body, but can never blunt the edge or vigour of the ſenſes, for the reaſon juſt now mention'd. One thing alone can do it, which is this, that the ſoul by the means of recollec-

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tion be turn'd wholly inward or within itſelf, to the end it may be taken up with God, who is there preſent. If the ſoul turn all its vigour and force within itſelf it is ſeparated from the ſenſes by this very action alone, and ſo employing its whole force and ſtrength within, it leaves, the ſenſes without vigour; and the more it advances and approaches to God, the more it is ſeparated and disjoyned from itſelf.

This is the reaſon why thoſe perſons in whom the attractions, of grace are ſtrong, do find themſelves wholly weakened in the outward man, ſo as many times to ſwoon or faint away. I don't by this mean, we ought not at all to mortify ourſelves; no! for mortification muſt always accompany prayer, according to the meaſure of every ones ſtrength, and circumſtances. But I ſay, that none ought

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to make mortification their chief exercise, nor absolutely to tie themselves to such and such austerities; but by simply following the inward attraction and employing themselves with the divine presence, without thinking of mortification in particular, God does make them to undergo all sorts of it: and he gives no respite to the souls that are faithful in surrendering themselves unto him, until he has mortified in them all that remains there to be mortified.

Therefore we must keep ourselves only attentive to God. All persons are not capable of outward austerities, but all are capable of this. There are two of our senses, in the mortifying of which we cannot well exceed; namely, the seeing and the hearing; because these take in the species and ideas of things; but

God

God doth it effectually, we need only to follow his Spirit.

The ſoul has a double advantage by obſerving this conduct; namely, that according as it withdraws from the outward, it ſtill draws nearer unto God: and by approaching unto God, beſides the ſecret power and virtue it receives which ſupports and preſerves it, it neceſſarily departs as far from ſin, as it approaches nearer to God; till at laſt it is brought to an habitual converſion.

Sect XI.

Of Converſion.

TURN ye and be converted unto God in the bottom of your hearts. according as you have deeply revolted from him, Iſa. xxxi. 6. vulg.

Converſion

Converſion is nothing elſe but the turning away from the creature to return unto God.

The ſoul being once converted, or turned to God, finds a very great facility to continue thus turned unto him: and the more it continues turned, the nearer it approacheth God, and cleaveth to him; and the nearer it approacheth God, the farther doth it neceſſarily withdraw from the creature which is oppoſite to God. So that hereby the ſoul is ſo powerfully confirmed in its converſion, that it becomes habitual, and as it were natural unto it. But you muſt know that this is not done by any violent working or exerciſe of the creature. The only exerciſe it can and ought to do on its part, is by the grace of God, to exert a ſtrong endeavour to turn and gather itſelf inward; after which there

is nothing more to be done, but to remain thus turned towards God in a continual adherence unto him.

God has an attractive virtue; which draweth the ſoul always more and more ſtrongly to himſelf, and in drawing it he purifies it; juſt as we ſee the ſun drawing up a thick vapour to itſelf; it attracts it gradually, the vapour uſing no other endeavour, but to let itſelf be drawn by the ſun; which the nearer it brings it to itſelf, the more it ſubtiliſes and purifies it. There is only this difference, that this vapour is not drawn freely, and followeth not voluntarily, as the ſoul doth.

This manner of introverting or turning inward, is moſt eaſy, and advanceth the ſoul not by conſtraint or violence, but by her moſt natural propenſion or bias to God, becauſe he is our center of reſt, The centre hath always a moſt

powerful attractive virtue; and the more eminent and ſpiritual the centre is, the more violent and impetuous is its attraction or magnetiſm, and the more difficult it is to ſtop it.

But beſides the attractive virtue of the centre, there is alſo given to all the creatures a mighty ſtrong propenſion to a re-union with their centre: hence the moſt ſpiritual and perfect have this inclination ſtrongeſt in them. No ſooner does a thing return towards its centre than it precipitates with an extreme ſwiftneſs into it, if ſo be that it be not ſtopt by ſome invincible impediment in the way. A ſtone in the air is no ſooner let go, towards the earth, than by its own proper weight it tends to it as its centre. Juſt ſo is it with the water and fire, which unleſs they are hindred, run inceſſantly

to their centre. And thus it is that the ſoul, by the ſtrong endeavour which it uſes to gather itſelf inward, being once turned into this propenſion to its center, falls gradually into its centre, without any other effort but the weight of its love; and the more it continues peaceable and calm, without its own motion, the more ſwiftly doth it advance, becauſe it gives the more place to this attractive and central virtue, to draw it ſtrongly unto itſelf.

We ought then to make the recollecting ourſelves the moſt inwardly that is poſſible, the chief concern, and not be troubled at the pain and difficulty which this exerciſe may give us; for that will be very ſoon recompenced by a wonderful concurrence on God's part, which will render it moſt eaſy; provided we be faithful, meekly

and gently to call back our heart, by a little sweet and peaceful retreat, and by serene and tender affections, whenever it is withdrawn through distractions or outward business. When at any time the passions arise, a little retreat inwards unto God, who is there present, doth allay them with great facility: any other way of engaging with them does rather exasperate than quiet them.

Sect. XII.

Of the Prayer of God's simple presence.

THE soul that is faithful in exercising itself, as hath been said, in love and affection to its God, is all amazed when it feels how by little and little he gets the entire possession of it. His presence becometh

becometh now ſo eaſy to the ſoul, that it can no more be without it; it has acquir'd a habit of this as well as prayer. The ſoul feels the calm and ſerenity prevailing upon it by degrees: the ſilence maketh up its whole prayer, and God giveth it an infus'd love, which is the beginning of an unſpeakable happineſs. O! were I permitted to proceed and declare the infinite degrees that follow! But here I muſt ſtop, ſince that I write only for beginners, waiting till God ſhall be pleas'd to bring forth what may be ſerviceable for all ſtates.

It muſt ſuffice only to ſay, that then it is of great conſequence to ceaſe from all ſelf-activity, that God alone may act in us. *Be ſtill and acknowledge that I am God*; is what he adviſeth us by *David*. Pſ. 45. 10. But the creature is ſo fond of what it does itſelf, that it be-

lieves it doth nothing, if it do not feel, know and diſtinguiſh its own operation. It does not ſee that the ſwiftneſs of its motion hindereth it from perceiving its ſteps, and that God's operation becoming more ſtrong ſwalloweth up that of the creature; even as we ſee that the ſun as it ariſes, doth gradually ſwallow up all the light of the ſtars, which were very diſtinct before he appeared. It is not for want of light that we cannot then diſtinguiſh the ſtars, but the exceſs of light.

The caſe is the ſame here; the creature can't diſtinguiſh its own operation, becauſe a general and ſtrong light abſorbeth all its little diſtinct lights, and by his ſurpaſsing ſplendor and brightneſs makes them entirely diſappear. So that they who charge this ſort of prayer with idleneſs, are very much miſtaken: and 'tis for want of experience

ence that they ſay ſo. O did they but give themſelves ſome little trouble to make tryal of it! they would in a very little time know it experimentally.

I tell you therefore that this abatement of ſelf-activity proceeds not of want, but of abundance, as any that will make the experiment, will clearly perceive. He will know that it is not an unfruitful ſilence, occaſioned through want, but a ſilence full, and unctuous proceeding from abundance.

Two ſorts of perſons are ſilent, the one becauſe they have nothing to ſay; and the other, becauſe they have too much. The caſe is the ſame in this degree of prayer we ſpeak of. They are ſilent not for want; but thro' fulneſs and exceſs.

The water cauſes death to two perſons in a very different manner. One

One dieth of thirſt, and the other is drowned: one dieth thro' the want, and the other thro' the abundance of it. Even ſo here, it is the abundance that makes the operations to ceaſe. Therefore 'tis of great importance in this degree for one to remain in as much ſilence as poſſibly he can.

An infant at the nurſes breaſts gives us a ſenſible demonſtration of this. It begins to move its tender lips, that it may cauſe the milk to come; but when the milk cometh in abundance, it is content to ſwallow it down, without making any ſenſible motion: if it ſhould make any, it would but prejudice itſelf by ſpilling the milk, and ſo be oblig'd to give over.

Juſt ſo at the beginning of prayer, we ought firſt of all to move the lips of our affection, but when the milk of grace doth flow, there is nothing by us to be done, but to abide

abide in ſtilneſs and repoſe, gently ſwallowing down what is given in; and when the milk ceaſeth to come, to move again the affection a little, as the infant doth the lip. Should we do otherwiſe, we could not profit by the grace, which is here communicated to draw the ſoul into the repoſe of love, and not to excite it to the multiplicity of its own motions.

But what becometh of this child that ſwalloweth the milk ſo gently and in peace, without moving or ſtirring? Who could believe that it was nouriſhed by this manner? And yet the more it ſucks in peace, the more it thrives by the milk. What is it, I ſay, that happeneth to this child? Why, it falleth aſleep in its mother's boſom: and likewiſe the ſoul that is quiet and peaceful in prayer, falleth oftentimes into a ſpiritual (or inward) ſlumber,

ber, wherein all the faculties and powers thereof are ſilent, until they are prepared to enter into the ſubſtance of that which is given them tranſiently. You ſee how the ſou is here led in a way that is wholly natural, without pain, without violence, without ſtudy, without artifice.

The inward ground is not a ſtrong hold that is to be taken by canon and ſtorm: 'tis a kingdom of peace which is gain'd only by love. And thus if any one will but ſweetly follow this little train, in the foreſaid manner, he ſhall quickly arrive at infuſed prayer. God does not require any thing that is extraordinary or too difficult; but on the contrary, a meerly ſimple and child-like way of proceeding doth pleaſe him beſt.

That which is greateſt and moſt eminent in religion, is indeed the eaſie

eaſieſt of all. This is alſo true in natural things. Would you go to ea? Then take boat upon a river, nd you ſhall get at it inſenſibly nd without trouble. Would you go o God? Take this ſo very ſweet nd eaſy way, and you ſhall ſhortly come at him, in a manner that will even ſurprize you. O if you would but make the trial! you would oon be convinced that we have old you but a very little of it; for hen your own experience would go very far beyond all that we have aid. O! what are you afraid of? Why don't you readily caſt yourſelf into the arms of eſſential love, who ſtretched them forth upon the croſs only that he might receive you. What danger can there be to truſt God, and purely to reſign yourſelf to him? Ah! he will not deceive you, unleſs it be in a very agreeable manner, namely, by giving

ing you much more than you ex pect; whereas they who expect any thing from themselves, may come to hear that rebuke which God giveth them by the mouth of the prophet Isaiah ch. 57. 10. vulg. *Thou hast wearied thyself in the multiplicity of thy ways, and yet thou hast never said, let me rest in peace.*

Sect. XIII.

Of Rest before God.

THE soul being arrived hither hath no need of any other preparation for going to God but of it *Rest*. For here it is that the presence of God begins to be infus'd and almost continual all the day long, which is the great fruit of prayer, or rather the continuation of it. Here the soul enjoys in its inward groun-

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in ineſtimable happineſs: it finds hat God is more in it than its ſelf. t hath but one only thing to do hat it may find him, which is to ink down into itſelf. So ſoon as t ſhuts its bodily eyes, it finds itelf taken up into a ſtate of prayr: it ſtands amazed at this infiite good, and there paſſes a conerſation within it, which the outvard man doth not interrupt. That nay be ſaid of this manner of rayer; which is ſpoken of wiſlom; Wiſd. 7. 11. *All good things re come along with it.* For the virues flow ſweetly into this ſoul, vhich likewiſe practiſeth them after o eaſy a manner, that they ſeem natural to it. A ſeed or ſpirit of life, and a principle of fecundity, ſpringth up in her, which giveth it a acility to all that is good, and an nſenſibility to all that is evil. Let t therefore faithfully perſiſt in this

state, and beware that it seek not after any other disposition whatsoever, but its simple rest: it has nothing to do, but to suffer itself to be filled with this divine effusion. This is the most perfect internal disposition of which a soul is capable for receiving the sacrament, or performing any other religious duty.

Sect. XIV.

Of the inward Silence.

THE Lord is in his holy temple, let all the earth keep silence before him.
Hab. 2. 20.

The reason why the inward silence is so necessary, is, because this is a proper disposition, and requisite for receiving into the soul the

the Word, which is the eternal and eſſential ſpeech.

It is a well known truth, that n order to receive the outward vord, we muſt give ear and hark-:n. The ſenſe of hearing, is nade for receiving the word, which s ſpoken or communicated to it. The hearing is a ſenſe more paſſive han active; it receiveth, but doth ıot communicate. And becauſe he internal eſſential Word, deſir-:th to ſpeak within the ſoul, and to :ommunicate itſelf to, and revive ınd quicken it; it is abſolutely ıeceſſary that the ſoul be atten-:ive.

On this account it is, that there re ſo many places in ſcripture, vhich exhort us to hear God, and o be attentive to his voice. We night eaſily obſerve a great many f them, but 'twill be ſufficient to nention theſe two or three. Iſa. 51.

4. *Hearken unto me all ye that are my people, and give ear unto my voice O nation that I have choſen!* And again, chap. 46. 3. vulg. *Hearken unto me all ye whom I bear in my boſom,* and *whom I carry in my bowels!* Again, Pſ. 45. 10. *Hearken, O my daughter! Conſider, and incline thine ear, forget thy kindred and thy father's houſe, ſo ſhall the king greatly deſire thy beauty.*

External ſilence is moſt neceſſary to improve and cultivate the internal; and indeed 'tis impoſſible to become inward or ſpiritual, without loving ſilence and retirement. God himſelf tells us ſo by the mouth of his prophet, Hoſ. 2. 14. vulg. *I will lead her into ſolitude, and there will I ſpeak to her heart.* How can one be inwardly taken up with God, and yet be outwardly buſied about a thouſand trifles? This is certainly impoſſible.

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When your weakneſs at any time has led you to be ſcatter'd and diſtracted abroad, you muſt make a little retreat or retire inwards, to which you muſt always be faithful, whenſoever you are ſcatter'd and diſſipated. It would ſignify but little to pray, and recollect ones ſelf for half an hour or an hour, if we do not preſerve the unction and ſpirit of prayer all the day long.

Sect. XV.

Of Confeſſion and Self-Examination.

EXAMINATION ought always to go before confeſſion, and hey that would perform it aright, muſt lay themſelves open before God, who will not be wanting to en-

lighten them, and make them to know the nature of their faults. But they muſt take care to examine themſelves in peace and tranquility, expecting to have the knowledge of their ſins given them *from God*, rather than from their own particular ſcrutiny.

When we exert any ſtrong endeavours in examining ourſelves, we are readily miſtaken: we believe *the good to be evil, and the evil good*, Iſa. v. 20. and ſelf-love naturally deceives us. But when we expoſe ourſelves before the all-ſeeing God, this divine ſun diſcovers to us even the minuteſt actions. Therefore we ought to abandon and reſign ourſelves to God, both as to examination and confeſſion.

So ſoon as the ſoul is advanced to this manner of prayer, God takes particular care to reprove it fo

or all the faults it commits. It is o ſooner guilty of any eſcape or eviation, but it feels a certain burn- ng that rebukes it. Then it is that God makes ſo ſtrict an enquiry, that e does not ſuffer any thing to eſ- ape; and then the ſoul has no- ning to do but to turn itſelf ſimply owards God, and to ſuffer the ain and correction which he in- icteth.

Now this examination on God's art being continual, the ſoul can- ot any more examine itſelf: and f it be faithful in reſigning itſelf to God, it will be much better tried nd inſpected into by his divine ight, than it can be by all its own ares; and experience will con- vince it that this is true.

You muſt neceſſarily take notice of one thing; *namely*, that the ſouls which walk in this way will be often ſurprized to find, that when they begin

begin to confeſs their ſins unto God, inſtead of ſorrow and contrition, which they were wont to feel, a ſweet and ſerene love ſeizes their heart. Thoſe who are not acquainted with this matter would, it may be, withdraw from it to form an act of contrition, becauſe they have heard ſay, that this is neceſſary. But they don't perceive that they loſe the true contrition, which is this infuſed love, infinitely more important than any thing they could do of themſelves. They have here one eminent act which comprehends the other acts with more perfection, though they have not theſe diſtinct and multiplied as before. Therefore let them not give themſelves the trouble to do any other thing, when God acteth thus graciouſly in them, and with them.

To hate ſin in this manner, is to hate

nate it as God doth. The pureſt ove of any, is, that which God ope- ates in the ſoul. Let it not there- ore be eager to act, but let it re- nain ſuch as it is, according to the viſe man's counſel, Ecclus. xi. 22. *Put your truſt in God, and continue in eſt in the place where he hath ſet ou.*

The ſoul will admire alſo that it hould forget its defects and fai- ures, and have ſuch difficulty to emember them: yet it ought not o be troubled at this, for theſe two eaſons: one is, becauſe this for- getfulneſs is a ſign of its purifica- ion from the fault; and the excel- ency of this ſtate conſiſteth in this; *namely*, to forget all that concerneth is, that we may remember *God* nly. The other reaſon is, that God faileth not to diſcover to he ſoul its greateſt faults: for he

he maketh the inſpection himſelf and the ſoul will ſee, that by this way it ſhall better compaſs its end, than by all its own endeavours.

This is not to be applied to thoſe ſtates, where the ſoul being yet in the active part, may and ought to uſe its care and induſtry in performing all things, more or leſs according to the meaſure of its advancement. But as to the ſouls that are come up to this degree, let them keep to what we have told them, and let them not change their ſimple and ſilent exerciſes. Let them ſuffer God to act, and let them keep ſilence.

Sect. XVI.

)f Reading, and of Vocal Prayers.

[HE manner of reading in this degree is, that as ſoon as one els a little recollection of mind, ought to ceaſe, and remain in llneſs, reading but little, and not ing on after he finds himſelf awn into the inward. The ſoul no ſooner call'd to internal ſi-nce, but it ought to forbear to rthen itſelf with vocal prayers, cept a very few; and even in oſe if it finds any difficulty, and els itſelf drawn to ſilence, it ſhould ide ſilent, and not ſtrive or uſe y effort againſt it.

Let it not vex itſelf, nor fetter elf, but ſuffer itſelf to be led by the

the Spirit of *God, who will assured lead it into all truth.*

Sect. XVII.

Of Petitions.

HERE the soul will find itse unable to make those re quests to God, which at other time it was wont to do with great facility But it ought not to be surprized a this; for then is it that the spir asketh for the saints that which good, and perfect, and agreeabl to the will of God: *The Spirit assis us even in our infirmities, because w know not what to pray for as we ough nor how to pray; but the Spirit itse maketh intercession for us with groa which cannot be uttered,* Rom. vii 26. Moreover, I say, we must s con

ond God's deſign, which is, chiefly
o ſtrip the ſoul of its own opera-
ons, that he may ſubſtitute his in
ieir room. Suffer him then to do
, and do not tie yourſelf to any
ing of yourſelf, how good ſoever
may ſeem to be: for to be ſure
is not then ſuch to you, if it turns
ou away from that which God de-
reth of you; but the will of *God*
preferable to every other good
eſides. Rid yourſelf therefore
f your own intereſts, and live
y faith and reſignation: here
is that faith begins to ope-
ate in the ſoul by way of emi-
ency.

Sect. XVIII.

Of Defects or Infirmities

WHenſoever we have fallen into any defect, or have at any time gone out of our way, we muſt immediately turn inwards; becauſe this default having led us away from *God*, we ought as ſoon as poſſible to return unto him, and ſuffer patiently the compunction which he worketh in us.

It is a matter of great importance not to be vexed or diſturbed becauſe of our defects; for this trouble or diſquiet proceedeth from a ſecret pride, or from the love and eſteem of our own excellence. We are uneaſy when we feel what we are: but if we deſpond

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or diſcourage ourſelves thereby, we are weakened ſo much the more; and the reflection we make upon our faults begetteth in us a peeviſhneſs or fretting, which is worſe than the fault itſelf.*

A ſoul that is truly humble doth not at all wonder at its infirmities; and the more it ſeeth itſelf miſerable, the more it reſigneth itſelf to *God*, and endeavoureth to keep cloſe to him, ſeeing the great need that it hath of his aſſiſtance. We ought to obſerve this conduct ſo much the more, that God himſelf hath told it us, ſaying, *I will make thee to underſtand what thou oughteſt to do;*

* *Trouble and diſquiet do but ſink and entangle the ſoul the more; whereas a vigorous act of converſion to the* divine preſence *within us, attended with a lively faith and an humble confidence, doth infallibly extinguiſh the temptation, diſpel the darkneſs, and overcome the enemy. And one that ſtands in God's preſence muſt needs hate ſin, as God hateth it.*

I will teach thee the way by which thou ſhouldſt go, and I will have my eye continually upon thee for thy guide, Pſa. xxxii. 8.

Sect. XIX.

Of Diſtractions and Temptations.

IN all our diſtractions and temptations, inſtead of combating them directly, (which would only encreaſe them, and take the ſoul off from adhering to God, which ought to be its continual employment) we ought ſimply to turn away our eye from them, and draw nearer and nearer to God; like a little child, which ſeeing a monſter, doth not ſtand to fight him, nor yet ſo much as to look at him, but meekly ſinketh down into its mother's boſom,

boſom, where 'tis ſafe and ſecure. *God is in the midſt of her, ſhe ſhall not be moved: he will help her, and that right early.* Pſa. lxvi. 5.

When we poor feeble creatures do otherwiſe, thinking to attack our enemies, we find ourſelves often wounded if not entirely defeated: but continuing ſimply in the preſence of God, we ſhall ſoon find ourſelves more than conquerors. This was *David*'s conduct, *I have*, ſaid he, *the Lord always preſent with me, and I ſhall not be moved: therefore my heart rejoiceth, and my fleſh alſo ſhall reſt in ſafety*, Pſa. xvi. 8. Again 'tis ſaid in Exodus xiv. 14. *The Lord ſhall fight for you, and you ſhall keep yourſelves in peace.*

Sect. XX.

Of true Prayer and Adoration.

PRAYER, according to St *John*'s account of it, is an incenſe, whoſe ſweet ſmelling ſavour aſcends to God: for which purpoſe *the angel held a cenſer, in which was the perfume of the prayers of the ſaints,* Rev. viii. 3.

Prayer is the pouring out of the heart in the preſence of God: thus ſaid *Samuel*'s mother, *I have poured out my heart in the preſence of the Lord,* 1 Sam. i. 15. Therefore the prayer, which the kings or wiſe men poured forth at the feet of the child *Jeſus*, in the ſtable of *Bethlehem*, was ſignified by the incenſe which they offered. Prayer is nothing elſe but a warmth of love, which as

as it melts and diſſolves the ſoul, ſubtilizes it, and cauſes it to aſcend even to God: according as it is melted, ſo it gives forth its ſweet ſmell, and this ſmell cometh from the love which burneth it.

This the ſpouſe meaneth when ſhe ſaith, *While my Beloved was on his couch, my ſpikenard ſent forth the ſmell thereof*, Cant. i. 12. The couch is the ground or centre of the ſoul: while God is there, and one knows how to dwell with him, and keep in his preſence, this preſence gradually melts and diſſolves the hardneſs of this ſoul, and being melted it ſends forths its *odours*. And therefore the Beloved, ſeeing that *his ſpouſe was thus melted ſo ſoon as he had ſpoken*, Cant. v. 6. ſaith to her, *Who is this that aſcendeth out of the wilderneſs as a little cloud of perfume?* chap. iii. 6.

Thus doth this ſoul aſcend to her God.

God. But to this end it must suffer *self* or her *own will*, to be destroyed by the power of divine love. This is a state of sacrifice essential to the Christian religion, whereby the soul suffereth the destruction of its *own will*, that the will of God may be done, and thereby rendereth true homage to the sovereign of the universe; as 'tis written, *God alone is great, and he is honoured only by the humble*, Eccluſ. iii. 20. We must die to *self* or our *own will*, that Jesus Christ, who is *the Word* that liveth and abideth for ever, may live and prevail, be heard and obeyed. That our *own will*, or the life of *self* being *dead*, *our life may be hid* with *Christ in God*. In which consisteth that adoration that giveth all *honour*, *glory*, and *power*, *unto God* and *our Redeemer for ever and ever*.

This is the prayer of truth; this is *to worship the Father in spirit and in truth*:

truth: John iv. 23. In *ſpirit*, becauſe we are thereby drawn from our human and carnal manner of acting, to enter into the purity of the ſpirit which prayeth in us. And *in truth*, becauſe the ſoul is thereby placed in the truth of the ALL of GOD, and of the NOTHING of *the creature*.

There are only theſe two truths, the *All* and the *Nothing*: every thing elſe is a counterfeit. We cannot honour *God's All*, but by our own *annihilation*; and we are no ſooner annihilated, that is, emptied of ourſelves; than *God*, who allows not any thing to be void without filling it, doth repleniſh us with himſelf.

O did we but know the infinite good which accrue to the ſoul from this prayer, we would ſcarce do any thing elſe! This is *the pearl of great price*: this is *the hidden treaſure*,

ſure. Mat. xiii. 44, 45. He that find
eth it, moſt cheerfully ſelleth al
that he hath to purchaſe it. This i
the river of living water, riſing up unt
eternal life. John iv. 14, & 23. *Thi*
is to worſhip God in ſpirit and in truth
and this is to practiſe the purel
precepts of the goſpel.

Doth not *Jeſus Chriſt* aſſure *us*, Lu
xvii. 21. that *the kingdom of God is with*
in us? This kingdom is underſtoo
two ways. One is, when God is f
much maſter of us, that nothin
doth any more reſiſt him: then ou
ſoul is truly his kingdom. Th
other is, when poſſeſſing God wh
is the ſovereign good, we poſſe
the kingdom of God, which is th
height of felicity, and the very en
for which we were created; accord
ing to the proverb, it tis ſaid, *t*
ſerve God is to reign. The end fo
which we were created is, to en
joy God even in this life: ye
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las, this is leaſt in the thoughts of ioſt men.

Sect. XXI.

hat the ſoul acteth more diſintereſted and more nobly by this manner of prayer than by any other.

WHEN ſome perſons hear of the prayer of ſilence, ieygroundleſly imagine, that there- n the ſoul is placed in a ſtate of tupidity, lifeleſs, and without ction. But certain it is that there he ſoul acteth more nobly and with nore enlargement, than ever it did iitherto ; becauſe in this kind of rayer it tis moved by *God* himſelf, and it acteth by his ſpirit. St. Paul would have us ſuffer ourſelves *to e led by the ſpirit of God. Rom.* viii. 14.

We don't ſay, that the ſoul ought not

not to act at all, but only that it ought to act dependently on the movement of grace. This is admirably described in the prophet *Ezekiel*'s vision of the wheels, *Chap.* i. 15, 21. *The Wheels*, which he saw, *had the spirit of life, and they went whithersoever that spirit led them; they were lifted up or stood still, according as they were moved, for the spirit of life was in them; but they never returned back.* Thus ought it to be with the soul; it should suffer itself to be moved and led by the quickening spirit that is in it, following still the movement of its action, and never following any other. But this motion never inclines it to go back; that is, either to reflect upon the creature, or to bend towards itself; but to go always streight forward, advancing continually towards its end.

This action of the soul is an action

ion altogether quiet and ſerene. When it acteth by itſelf, it acteth with hurry and fatigue; and hereby it diſtinguiſheth its own action. But when it acteth dependently on the ſpirit of grace, its action is ſo free, ſo eaſy, and ſo natural; that it ſeemeth as tho' it did nothing. *He hath brought me forth into a large place, he hath delivered me becauſe he loved me.* Pſal. xviii. 19.

So ſoon as the ſoul hath got into its central bent and tendency, that is to ſay, returned within itſelf by recollection, from that inſtant it begins to run its courſe towards its centre, the attractions of which give it at once the greateſt vigor and the ſwifteſt motion; for no ſwiftneſs is equal to that of its central tendency. This then is an action, but, it is ſo noble, ſo quiet, and ſo peaceable, that it ſeemeth to the ſoul

as tho' it doth not act at all, becaus its operation is so natural.

While a wheel is slowly turned, 'ti easy to perceive its motion distinctly, but when it goeth very swiftly, w can no longer distinguish any thin in it; just so the soul which continueth before God in quietness hath an infinitely noble and elevated action, but withal an action tha is most peaceable. The more th soul is in peace, the more swiftly i runneth; because it is wholly resigned to that spirit which moveth i and maketh it act.

This spirit is no other than Go himself, who draweth us, and draw ing us maketh us to run unto him as the divine lover well knew whe she said, Cant. i. 4. vulg. *Draw m and we will run.* Draw me, O m divine centre, by the profounde deep of my being, and by this th attraction the powers and sense

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ıall all run to thee! This attraction one is both an ointment which ealeth, and a perfume which draw-th us; *we will run* ſaith ſhe, *becauſe f the ſmell of thy perfumes*: this is a ioſt powerful attractive virtue, yet virtue which the ſoul follows moſt eely, and which being equally rong and ſweet, both draws by its ower and charms by its ſweetneſs. raw me (ſaith the ſpouſe) *and we ill run.* She ſpeaketh of herſelf. ıd to herſelf. *Draw me*, behold e unity of the centre which attracts *we will run*, behold the running ıd correſpondence of all the owers and ſenſes, which follow the traction of the inward ground of e ſoul.

Therefore we don't in the leaſt firm that we ought to remain idle, ıt that we ought to act only in ependance on the ſpirit of *God*, ıich ſhould animate us, ſince 'tis

only *in him, and by him, that we live that we act, and that we are, Acts* xvii. 28. This meek dependance upon the spirit of God, is absolutely necessary, and the soul will thereby infallibly arrive to that simplicity and unity in which it was at first created and it will thereby attain the end of its creation. Therefore we must quit the multiplicity of our actions, that we may enter into the simplicity and unity of God, *in whose image we were created. Gen.* i. 27. *The spirit of God is one only and manifold* or multiplied, Wisd. vii. 22. yet his unity hindereth not at all his multiplicity. We enter into his unity when we are united to his spirit, as having thereby one and the same spirit with him: and without departing from this unity, we are multiplied outwardly, in what regardeth his will. So that God acting infinitely and we suffering ourselves to be

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led by his ſpirit, go much further than our utmoſt activity could carry us.

We muſt ſuffer ourſelves to be guided by the eternal wiſdom: *For this wiſdom is more moving or active than the moſt moveable things, Wiſ.* ch. 7. 24. Let us then abide in dependance upon his motions, and we ſhall act indeed moſt powerfully. *By the Word were all things made, and without him was not any thing made that was made.* Joh. i. 3. God created us at firſt after his own image and likeneſs, and he inſpireth into us the ſpirit of the *Word, by that breath of life, Gen.* ii. 7, which he gave us when we were form'd to God's image, by the participation of this life of the Word, who is the image of his father: now this life is one, ſimple, pure, intimate and always fruitful. The devil having ſpoiled and disfigured this beautiful

image by ſin, it was neceſſary that the ſame Word, whoſe ſpirit was breathed into us at our creation, ſhould come to repair it. It was needful it ſhould be done by him, becauſe he is the eſſential image of his Father, and the defaced image does not repair itſelf by acting, but in being paſſive to the action of him who came to repair it.

Our action therefore ought only to be, to put ourſelves in a condition to ſuffer God's acting upon us, and to give place unto the Word, to new model again his image in us. An image that ſhould always be in motion, would hinder the painter from drawing any deſign upon it. All the motions which we make by our own ſpirit, do hinder this admirable painter from exactly working, and do occaſion the making imperfect ſtrokes. We muſt therefore remain in peace, not

not moving ourſelves but when he moveth us. *Jeſus Chriſt hath the life in himſelf*, Joh. v. 26. and every one that would live muſt receive life from him.

That this motion is the more noble, is a matter without diſpute, for certainly things have no value or worth, but ſo far as the principle whence they proceed is noble and ſublime, and the actions of a divine principle are divine actions; whereas the actions of the creature, how good ſoever they ſeem to be, are but human, or at the very beſt, but moral virtues. Jeſus Chriſt ſaith, that he hath the life in himſelf: all other beings have nothing but a borrowed life, but the Word hath the life in himſelf; and being communicative of his nature, he deſireth to communicate of his life to men. Therefore we muſt give way to this life, that

that it may flow into us; which cannot be done but by the emptying ourſelves, and looſing of the life of Adam, and our own will, as St. Paul aſſures us, 1 Cor. v. 17. *If any one be in Chriſt Jeſus, he is a new creature: all that was old is done away; all is become new.* Which cannot be done but by the death of our own ſelf-activity, to the end that God may act in us, and his divine will may be ſubſtituted in the place of ours.

It is not therefore pretended, that men ſhould not act at all; but only that all our doings ſhould be in dependance on being guided by the Spirit of God, giving way to his action in lieu of that of the creature. Which cannot be done but by conſent of the creature, and the creature cannot give this conſent, but by moderating its own activity, to give way by little and little that God's

God's operation may ſucceed in its ſtead.

Jeſus Chriſt in the goſpel, teaches us this is the way: *Martha* did good things, but becauſe ſhe did them in her own ſpirit, he reproved her. The ſpirit of man is turbulent and unquiet, and therefore it doth but little, though it appears to do a great deal. *Martha, Martha,* ſaid *Chriſt,* Luke x. 41, 42. *you diſquiet and torment yourſelf with a great many things; but after all, there is but one thing needful.* Mary *hath choſen the better part, which ſhall not be taken from her.*

What hath Mary choſen? It is peace, tranquillity, and reſt. She ceaſeth to act in appearance, that ſhe may ſuffer herſelf to be moved by the ſpirit of *Jeſus Chriſt*; ſhe ceaſeth to live, that ſo *Jeſus Chriſt* may live in her: and therefore it is ſo very neceſſary to renounce

renounce ones self and ones own operations, if we would follow *Jesus Christ*: for we can never follow *Jesus Christ* unless we are animated with his spirit. Now that the Spirit of *Christ* may be brought forth in us, it is necessary that our own spirit give place unto him. *Whosoever doth cleave or adhere to the Lord*, (saith St. *Paul*, 1 Cor. vi. 17.) *becometh one spirit with him*. And *David* said, Ps. lxxiii. 28. vulg. that *It was good for him to adhere unto God, and to put his whole confidence in him*. What is this adhesion? It is a beginning of union with Christ.

In this union there is a beginning, continuation, finishing, and perfect consummation. The beginning or entering into our union, is an inclination of the soul towards God. When the soul is introverted or turned inwards, in the manner aforesaid, it is in a tendency

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to its centre, and hath a ſtrong propenſion to union. In this propenſion is the union begun. Afterwards when it approacheth nearer to God, it adhereth, then it is united with him; and thence forwards becometh one ſpirit with him. Then it is that this ſpirit, which went forth from God, returns back unto God; it hath attained the end of its creation.

This divine life, this Spirit of Jeſus Chriſt, is the way we muſt of neceſſity walk in, for St. *Paul* aſſures us that *no man is Jeſus Chriſt's, if he hath not* his *Spirit.* Rom. viii. 9. Now then that we may be one with Chriſt, we muſt ſuffer ourſelves to be emptied of our own, that ſo we may be filled with his ſpirit; which we cannot be ſo long as we are full of ourſelves. St. Paul in the ſame place, Ver. 14. further proves the neceſſity of our being thus

thus moved by this bleſſed ſpirit when he ſaith, *All they that are acted by the ſpirit of God, are the children of God.* The ſpirit of the divine filiation, is therefore that of the divine nature animating us: therefore the apoſtle adds, *The ſpirit which ye have received is not a ſpirit of ſervitude to make you live in fear: but it is the ſpirit of God's children, whereby we cry, Abba Father!*

By no other ſpirit than that of *Chriſt*, can we partake of his filiation or ſonſhip; and *this ſpirit doth itſelf bear witneſs to ours, that we are the children of God*, Rom. viii. 16. So no ſooner doth the ſoul leave and give up itſelf to be animated by the ſpirit of God, but it experienceth in itſelf the teſtimony of this divine filiation: and this teſtimony greatly encreaſeth its joy, by the clear evidences it gives the ſoul, that *it is called to the liberty of God*

God's children, and that the ſpirit which it hath received, is not a ſpirit of ſervitude, but of liberty. The ſoul then feels that it acteth freely and ſweetly, though ſtrongly and infallibly.

St. Paul proves from our ignorances concerning the things we pray for, the neceſſity of our being in all things conducted, moved and animated by this divine Spirit: *The ſpirit*, ſaith he, *helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what to pray for, nor how to pray as we ought: but the ſpirit itſelf prayeth for us with groanings which are unutterable.* This is certain; if we do not know what we want, nor yet how to pray as we ought, for thoſe things which are neceſſary for us; and if the ſpirit that is in us, to whoſe motion we give up ourſelves, muſt needs aſk and pray for us, ought we not then to let this ſpirit do it? This

ſpirit is the ſpirit of the Wor whoſe petition is always heard an granted, as he ſaid himſelf; *I kno that thou heareſt me always*, John x 42. Did we let this ſpirit pray an interceed in us, we ſhould alway have our petitions heard an granted. And why ſo? It is (ad eth St. *Paul*) *becauſe he that ſearche the hearts, knows what the ſpirit deſi eth, foraſmuch as he intercedeth a cording to God for the ſaints*, Ron viii. 27. That is to ſay, becau this ſpirit aſketh for that only whic is conformable to the will of Go The will of God is, that we ſhou be ſaved, and that we ſhould b perfect. He therefore aſks, or i terceeds for that which is neceſſa for our perfection.

Why then after all this, do w oppreſs ourſelves with ſuperfluo cares, and weary out our lives i the multiplicity of our own way

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ithout ever ſaying, *Let us reſt in eace? God* himſelf inviteth us to eſt from all our labours and diſ- uiets, and to ſtay ourſelves on im: nay, he complaineth in the rophet *Iſaiah*, chap. lv. 2. with an nconceivable goodneſs, that we mploy the ſoul's ſtrength, its iches and its treaſure, in a thou- nd outward things, ſeeing that here is ſo very little to be done hat we may enjoy the in- nite good things which we ropoſe to ourſelves. *Where- ore do ye ſpend your money for at which cannot nouriſh you? nd your labour for that which nnot ſatisfy you? Hearken unto e attentively, feed yourſelves with e good nouriſhment which I do give u: and your ſouls being made fat erewith, ſhall indeed rejoice.*

O that men did but know what happineſs it is to hearken unto

God in this manner, and how exceedingly the soul is thereby strengthened! *All flesh must needs be silent in the presence of the Lord*, Zac. ii. 13. All must cease and be still so soon as he appeareth. Now God, to oblige us yet further to abandon ourselves without any reserve, assureth us by his prophet, that we need not be afraid of anything in giving up ourselves to him; because he taketh care of every one in particular. *Can a mother forget her own child*, (saith God) *and have no compassion on the son whom she hath conceived in her bowels? But even though she should forget, yet will not I ever forget you*, Isa. xlix. 15. O blessed words! full of divine consolation! who will any longer be afraid to surrender himself entirely to the guidance of God?

Sect. XXII.

Of Internal Acts.

THE acts of man are either external or internal. The external are thoſe that appear outwardly with regard to ſome ſenſible object, and which have no other moral good or evil, but what they receive from the internal principle whence they proceed.

I do not intend to ſpeak then, but of internal acts of the ſoul, only whereby it inwardly holds to ſome object, and ſo forſakes another. For inſtance, if when any ſoul is applied to *God*, I will do ſome act of another nature, I thereby forſake *God*, ſo much as the act of my turning toward created things is

ſtronger or weaker: on the othe hand, if when my ſoul is turne towards the creature, I will retur to God, there muſt be an act to with draw my ſoul from the creature and to turn it to *God*: and by how much the more perfect this act is by ſo much the more entire is th converſion. But till I am perfectly converted, I am continually unde a neceſſity of making acts of turn ing to God, (this may be accom pliſhed by ſome at once, which others do by little and little,) how ever, in each act I ought to exert the whole ſtrength of my ſoul to return to God, according to the counſel of the Son of *Syrach*, *Reunite all the motions of thy heart in the holineſs of God*, chap. xxx. 24. And as *David* did, *I will keep my whole ſtrength for thee*; Pſa. lviii. 10. which is done by entering ſtrongly into ones ſelf; as ſaith the ſcripture,

ture, *Return to your heart,* Iſaiah xlvi. 8. for we have wandered from our heart by ſin; and therefore God demands but our heart, ſaying, *My ſon give me thy heart, and let thine eyes be always fixed upon my ways,* Prov. xxiii. 26. To give ones heart to God, is to have at all times the eye, the force and vigor of the ſoul fixed upon him, and cleaving unto him, that one may perfectly follow his will in all things. Wherefore, when the heart is once applied to God, it ought to continue thus turned towards him.

But the mind of man being frail and full of levity, and the ſoul accuſtomed to roam abroad, is eaſily diverted and diſſipated; and therefore ſo ſoon as it perceives itſelf wandering abroad amongſt outward things, it muſt, by a ſimple act, return towards God,

God, and reinſtate itſelf in him: then its act will ſubſiſt ſo long as its converſion laſteth, by the powerful influence of its ſimple and unfeigned return to God. We know actions often repeated make a cuſtom, ſo that by this means the ſoul will be accuſtomed to converſion, and this cuſtom continued makes the action become altogether natural and habitual.

And then the ſoul ought not to perplex itſelf in ſeeking to form this act, becauſe it is already formed and ſubſiſts; nay, it cannot do it, without finding very great difficulty in it: beſides it will find that hereby it is drawn from its proper ſtate, under pretence of ſeeking after it, which is a thing it ſhould never do; eſpecially ſince the act ſubſiſts, and the ſoul is then in an habitual converſion and in an habitual love.

Men

Men ſeek after one act by ſeveral other acts, inſtead of keeping themſelves fixed by a ſimple act to *God* alone.

One may obſerve, that ſometimes he can with great eaſe make ſuch acts diſtinctly, but ſimply; which is a ſign that he was gone aſtray, and that now he enters again into his heart, after he had wandered from it. But let him take care to remain there in peace, now that he is returned to it. When any one thinks that he ought not to form any acts, he is much miſtaken, for he forms always ſome acts: but every one ought to form them according to the degree he is advanced to.

To clear up this place fully, which is indeed ſome difficulty, (the greateſt part of ſpiritual perſons, not comprehending it,) you

you must know that some acts are transient and distinct, and others are continued; again, some acts are direct, and others reflex. All cannot form the first, neither are all in the proper state of forming the second. The first sort of acts ought to be made by the persons who are gone astray: they ought to turn themselves again by an act which they distinguish, and which should be more or less strong, according as the diversion or turning aside was greater or smaller; so that when the straying is but little, one of the most simple acts is sufficient.

I call that the *continued act*, by which the soul is wholly turned towards its God by a direct act, which is not renewed by it, unless interrupted, because the first remains entire. The soul, I say, being

being turned after this manner, is indeed in the *love*, and dwelleth therein. *And he who dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God*, 1 John iv. 16. Then the ſoul hath entered as it were into the habit of the act, in which it repoſeth: yet its repoſe is not idle; for the firſt act continues all the while, which is a ſweet retirement into God, to which God attracteth it always moſt ſtrongly; and the ſoul ſo readily following this powerful attraction, and abiding in his love, is always more and more ingulfed and ſwallowed up in love; and here its action is infinitely more ſtrong, and more vigorous, than the firſt act which ſerved for nothing but to bring it home from its wandering.

Now the ſoul in this profound and

and ſtrong act, being wholl
turned towards its God, hath no
any perception of this act, becauſ
it is direct and not reflex. Whic
is the reaſon that this perſon no
explaining himſelf well, ſaith, tha
he does not form any acts: bu
it is a miſtake, for he never di
any either better or more active
Let him rather ſay, I do no
now diſtinguiſh any acts: and no
I do not do any acts. 'Tis true
he doth not do them by himſel
but he is drawn, and he followet
that which draweth him. *Lo*
is the weight which ſinketh hin
down, as a perſon falling into th
ſea ſinketh, and would ſink eve
to infinity, if the ſea were infi
nite: and without his perceptio
of it, he would deſcend into th
loweſt deep, with an incredibl
ſwiftneſs.

Therefor

Therefore to ſay, that one doth no acts, is to ſpeak improperly. All do acts, but all do them not after the ſame manner; and further the miſtake cometh hence, that many who know they muſt do acts, would do them diſtinct and ſenſible. Which indeed cannot be; for the ſenſible ones are for beginners, and the others are for advanced ſouls. To ſtop in the firſt acts, which are weak, and advance but little, is to deprive ones ſelf of the laſt. So in like manner, to endeavour to do the laſt acts without having paſſed through the firſt, were another no leſs conſiderable error.

All things then ought to be done in their proper ſeaſon. Every ſtate hath its *beginning*, its *progreſs*, and its *end*. He would be very wrong that ſhould reſolve not to go further than the beginning or firſt

ſtage, but fix himſelf there. Ther
is no art which hath not its progreſ
At the beginning there muſt be
labouring with diligence and toi
but then there follows an enjoyin
the fruit of ones labour. When
ſhip is in the dock, the marine
are forced to take pains to launc
her thence into the main ocean
but afterwards they eaſily turn h
to any coaſt they would ſteer. I
like manner, while the ſoul is y
in ſin and in the creatures, there
much ſtruggling and toil requir
to draw it out thence; there muſt
an untying or breaking of the cor
which hold it bound; by means
ſtrong and vigorous acts, with e
deavours to draw the ſoul inwar
removing it by little and little fr
its own port, and in removing
from thence, turn it inwards
God, which is the haven whereu
to we deſire to ſail.

Wh

When the veſſel is turned after his manner, proportionably as he advanceth in the ſea, ſhe is at diſtance from the land: and the further ſhe is from the land, the leſs need is there of any labour to draw her along. At laſt they begin to ſail moſt pleaſantly, and the veſſel runs ſo forcibly that they muſt quit the oars, which are now become uſeleſs. What doth the pilot then? He contenteth himſelf to ſpread the ſails, and hold the rudder. To ſpread the ſails, is to make the prayer of ſimply exposing or laying ones ſelf open before God, in order to be moved by his ſpirit. To hold the rudder, is to keep our heart from wandering out of the right path, recalling it gently, and guiding it according to the motion of the ſpirit of God, which by degrees getteth poſſeſſion of the heart, even as the wind cometh by

little and little to fill the ſails and drive on the veſſel. So long as the ſhip hath the wind fair, the pilot and mariners ceaſe from their labour, and repoſe themſelves; what a progreſs do they now make without fatiguing themſelves? They make more way in one hour in repoſing themſelves after this manner, and leaving the veſſel to the conduct of the wind, than they could do in a great deal of time by all their firſt utmoſt efforts; and if they would then row, beſides greatly fatiguing themſelves, their labour would be quite uſeleſs, and they would retard the veſſel.

This is the very conduct which we ought to obſerve in the ſpiritual life, and by acting in this manner we ſhall advance more in a little time by being moved by the divine ſpirit, than we can any other way by a great many of our own ſtrug-

ing

ings and efforts. Would people but take this method, they ſhould find it the eaſieſt in the world.

When the wind is contrary and the ſtorm great, the anchor muſt be caſt into the ſea, to ſtop the veſſel. This anchor is nothing elſe but confidence in God, and hope in his goodneſs, waiting in patience for the calm, and for fair weather, and till the wind prove favourable again; as did *David*: *I have waited* (ſaith he) *Pſ.* 40. 1. *for the Lord with great patience, and he hath at laſt humbled himſelf even to me.* We muſt therefore give up and reſign ourſelves to the ſpirit of God, leaving ourſelves to be guided by his motions.

Sect. XXIII.

An admonition to Pastors and Preachers.

IF all those that labour to gain souls, did endeavour to win them by the heart, putting them immediately upon prayer, and into the inward life, they would make numberless and lasting conversions. But so long as they go the other way to work, namely, by that which is external; and that instead of drawing souls to Jesus Christ, by the occupation of the heart in him, they do only load them with a thousand precepts for outward exercises; there comes but very little fruit thereof, and even that little does not endure.

If ministers would zealously instruct

inſtruct their pariſhoners after this manner, the very ſhepherds in keeping their flocks, might have the ſpirit of the primitive Chriſtians; and the ploughmen in guiding their plough-ſhare, might entertain themſelves in a bleſſed intercourſe with God: the tradeſmen and labourers that are ſpending themſelves with toil, might gaher from hence everlaſting fruits: vickedneſs might be baniſhed in a ittle time, and the whole pariſh ecome ſpiritual.

For when once the heart is won, ll the reſt is eaſily corrected. Thence it is that God principally lemands the heart. By this mehod alone, drunkenneſs, blaſpheny, uncleanneſs, animoſity, theft, nd the whole train of evils, which o ſo univerſally prevail, might be uite deſtroyed. Chriſt might eign peaceably over all, and the appearance

appearance of his church might be ſeen once again in every place. Errors in the fundamentals of Chriſtianity, are entered into the world, through the loſs of the life of God in the ſoul: if this were eſtabliſhed again, thoſe errors would ſoon be deſtroyed. That error gets the poſſeſſion of ſouls, 'tis through want of faith and of prayer; if we taught our wandering brethren to believe ſimply, and to pray, inſtead of much diſputing with them, we might bring them back gently to God.

O what ineſtimable loſſes are ſuſtained by the neglect of this ſimple inſtruction! O what account have thoſe perſons that have the charge of ſouls to give to God, for not having diſcovered this hidden treaſure, to all them whom they ſerve by the miniſtry of the word! They excuſe themſelves under the

the pretence, that there is danger in this way, or that common people are incapable of the things of the ſpirit. But the oracle of truth aſſures us of the contrary, ſaying, Prov. xii. 22. *The Lord placeth his affection on thoſe who walk in ſimplicity.* And what danger can there be to walk in the one only way, which is *Jeſus Chriſt*, giving ourſelves entirely to him, beholding him continually, putting our whole confidence in his grace, and tending with all our ſtrength and might to his pure love?

So far is it from being true, that the ſimple, the plain and the ignorant, are incapable of this eſſential accompliſhment, that they are indeed the more fit for it; becauſe they are more teachable, more humble, and more innocent; and becauſe not being uſed to reaſoning, they do not ſo much adhere

to

to their own judgments: being moreover without knowledge, they let themselves be moved and acted more easily by the spirit of God; whereas others, who are tied down and blinded by their own self-sufficiency, do resist a great deal more the divine inspiration. Thus God declareth to us, that 'tis to the little ones that he gives the understanding of his law: *The entrance of thy word* (saith *David*) Ps. cxix. 130. *giveth light, it giveth understanding to the simple.* He assureth us likewise, Prov. iii. 32. that he loveth *to converse familiarly with the simple ones. The Lord preserveth the simple; I was reduced to extremity, and he saved me.* Ps. cxvi. 6. Let pastors and teachers then take heed, not to hinder the little children from coming to *Christ. Suffer these little children* (said he to his apostles) Mat. xix. 14. *to come unto me; for it is*

unto

unto them that the kingdom of heaven doth belong. Jeſus Chriſt ſaid this to the apoſtles, becauſe they would have hindered the children from coming unto him. Oftentimes men apply the remedy to the body, and mean while the diſeaſe is at the heart.

The great reaſon why their ſucceſs in the reformation of men is ſo ſmall and tranſient, eſpecially of labouring perſons, is, becauſe miniſters and teachers ſet about it outwardly. Did they but give them at firſt *the key to the hidden life of God in the ſoul*, Reformation of the outward actions would naturally follow. Now this is moſt eaſy, namely, to teach them to ſeek God in their hearts, to think upon him, to return unto him there, whenever they find themſelves diſtracted, to do all things, and ſuffer all things with a deſign to pleaſe him: this

this is to ſend them to the fountai
of all good, and ſhewing then
where to find all that is ne
ceſſary for their ſanctification an
ſalvation.

I earneſtly requeſt and conjur
all you who miniſter to ſouls, t
put them immediately into th
way, which is *Jeſus Chriſt*; and h
conjures you this, by all the bloo
which he hath ſhed for theſe ſou
whom he hath entruſted to you
miniſtry: *Speak ye to the heart*
Jeruſalem, Iſaiah xl. 2. O y
preachers of his word! O ye m
niſters of his ſacraments! Eſtabli
his kingdom; and that you ma
eſtabliſh it truly, make him
reign over hearts! For as it is t
heart alone which can oppoſe itſe
to his empire; ſo is it by the tot
ſubjection of the heart that his ſ
vereignty is the moſt honoure
Give ye glory to the holineſs of God, a

he ſhall become your ſanctification, Iſa. viii. 13. Teach your people how to pray, not by reading forms of devotion, but by the prayer of the heart, and not of the head; a prayer of the ſpirit of God, and not of man's invention.

Alas! Men will be making ſtudied prayers; and while they ſeek to adjuſt them too much, they render them impracticable. They have eſtranged the children from the beſt of all fathers, in teaching them a language too polite. Go ye, poor children, ſpeak to your heavenly Father in your own language; how barbarous and rude ſoever it be, it is not ſo to him. A father loveth rather a diſcourſe, which love and reſpect may put into diſorder, (foraſmuch as he ſeeth that this cometh from the heart) than an harangue that is dry, empty and barren, though

never ſo well ſtudied. O how mightily do the glances of love in the heart delight and pleaſe him! They expreſs infinitely more than all the fine language, whether of extempore, or of the beſt *invented* forms of prayer.

Men in endeavouring to teach how to love by rule and method, have in a great meaſure loſt the love itſelf. O how little neceſſary it is to teach an art of loving! The language of love is barbarous to him who is not in love, but it is very natural to him that is in love: and one can never better learn how to love God, than in loving him. In this caſe the moſt dull become the moſt expert, becauſe they behave themſelves more ſimply and more cordially. The ſpirit of God hath no need o our regulations, he taketh up ſhepherds, when he pleaſeth, t

mak

make of them prophets: and ſo far is he from ſhutting the palace of prayer againſt any one, as ſome imagine, that, on the contrary, he leaveth all the gates thereof open to all; and *wiſdom* crieth in the public places, *Whoſo is ſimple, let him come unto me*, Prov. ix. 4. And ſhe ſaith unto them that are without underſtanding, *Come ye, eat of the bread which I give you, and drink of the wine which I have prepared you*, ver. 3. Doth not Jeſus Chriſt thank his Father, *That he hath hidden his ſecrets from the wiſe, and hath revealed them to the little ones*, Matt. xi. 25.

Sect. XXIV.

What is the safest Method to arrive at the Divine Union.

IT is impossible to arrive at the divine union by the way of meditation only, or even of the affections; or by any luminous and distinctly comprehended prayer whatsoever. There are several reasons for it: behold here the principal.

In the *first* place, according to the scripture, *No man shall see God so long as he is living*, Exod xxxiii. 20. Now all the exercise of discursive prayer, or even of active contemplation, (considered as an end, and not as a disposition to the passive) are living exercises, whereby

whereby we cannot ſee God; that is to ſay, be united to him. It is neceſſary, that whatever is of man, and of his own induſtry, how noble and exalted ſoever it may be; 'tis neceſſary, I ſay, that all this ſhould die. St. *John* reports, that *in heaven there was a great ſilence*, Rev. viii. 1. Heaven repreſents the ground and the centre of the ſoul, where all muſt be in ſilence, while the majeſty of *God* appears therein, all the efforts of our own ſtrength, and all our own ſelf-ſufficiency muſt be deſtroyed; becauſe nothing is oppoſite to God but ſelfiſhneſs; and all the malignity of man is in this principle of *ſelf* ſubſiſting, it being the ſource of his evil nature: ſo that the more any ſoul loſeth its own will or ſelfiſh property, the more pure it becometh; and that which would be a defect in a ſoul living to it-

ſelf, is not ſo any more, by reaſon of the purity and innocence which it hath contracted, ſince it loſt that which cauſed the unlikeneſs to its God.

Secondly, To unite two ſuch contraries, as are the purity of God and the impurity of the creature; the ſimplicity of God, and the multiplicity of man, 'tis needful that God do ſingularly operate. For this can never be effected by the effort of the creature, ſince two things cannot be united which have no ſimilarity or likeneſs to each other; even as an impure metal will never be fully united with gold that is ſolidly pure.

What doth God do in this caſe? He ſendeth before him his own *wiſdom*, even as the fire ſhall be ſent upon the earth, to conſume by its activity whatſoever is of impure therein. The fire con-

ſumeth

ſumeth all things, and nothing reſiſteth its activity. It is the ſame with *wiſdom*; it conſumeth every impurity in the creature, to diſpoſe it for the divine union.

This impurity, which is ſo oppoſite to divine union, is ſelfiſhneſs and activity. Selfiſhneſs, becauſe it is the ſource of impurity, which can never be joined with eſſential purity: even as the rays of the ſun may indeed touch the dirt, but cannot unite with it.

Activity, becauſe God being in an infinite reſt, 'tis neceſſary, in order to the ſoul being made capable of union with him, that it do partake of his reſt; without which he cannot be united with it, by reaſon of the unlikeneſs: ſince that two things may be united, 'tis neceſſary that they be in a proportionable reſt.

And it is for this reaſon that the ſoul

ſoul arriveth not to the divine union, but by the reſting of its will; and it cannot be united unto God, until it be in a central reſt, and in the purity of its creation. To purify the ſoul, God maketh uſe of *wiſdom;* as fire is made uſe of to purify gold. It is certain that gold cannot be purified but by the fire, which conſumes by little and little all that is earthly and of a contrary nature therein, and ſeparates it from the gold. It is not enough for the gold, in order to be made uſe of by the goldſmith, that the earthly part be mixed with the gold: 'tis neceſſary moreover that the fire do melt it, for to draw out of its ſubſtance whatever remains in it that is of a contrary or earthly nature: and this gold is caſt ſo often into the fire till it loſeth all impurity, and every

every diſpoſition that is left to be purified.

When the goldſmith can find no more mixture, becauſe it is come to its perfect purity and ſimplicity, the fire can no more act upon it; and it might be there an age, without being made thereby more pure, and without any the leaſt diminution of its ſubſtance. Then it is fit for the moſt excellent works; and if this gold contracts any impurities at any time afterwards, theſe are defilements newly contracted only by the commerce and nearneſs of foreign bodies. But there is this difference, that this impurity is merely ſuperficial, and doth not make it unfit for uſe: whereas the other impurity was hidden in the centre or ground, and as it were interwoven with its nature. Nevertheleſs perſons who are unacquainted with this, ſeeing a piece

a piece of pure gold that is truly refined, covered outwardly over with filth, would not value it ſo much, as they would a piece of coarſe gold that is very impure when its outſide is poliſhed.

Moreover, you may obſerve that gold of an inferior degree of purity, cannot be joined with that of a ſuperior degree of purity there is a neceſſity for the one to contract of the impurity of the other, or for this to partake of the purity of that. To mix fine gold with coarſe, is what the goldſmith will never do. What will he then do? He will cauſe all the earthly mixture of this impure gold to be deſtroyed, by the fire, to the end he may be able to unite it with the purity of the firſt. And this is it that St. *Paul* ſaith, namely, *that our works ſhall be tried as by fire, that what is combuſtible may be burnt*

1 Cor

1 Cor. iii. 13, 15. He addeth, *that the perſon whoſe works ſhall be found fewel for the fire ſhall be burnt although he himſelf ſhall be ſaved, yet ſo as by fire.* The meaning is, that there are certain works which are accepted and approved; but to the end that he who hath wrought them may be alſo pure, it is needful that they paſs thro' the fire, that ſo the ſelfiſh mixture may be taken from them: and it is in this ſenſe that God will examine and *judge our righteouſneſſes, Pſ.* lxxv. 2. vulg. Becauſe *man ſhall never be ſanctified by the works of the law, but by the righteouſneſs of the faith which cometh of God. Rom.* iii. 20.

This being once laid down, I ſay, that to the end man may be united to his God, there is a neceſſity that his *wiſdom*, accompanied with the divine juſtice as a devouring fire, ſhould extirpate and root out of the

the ſoul, all whatſoever it hath of earthly, carnal, and ſelf-activity; that having cleanſed and purified the ſoul from all this, God may unite himſelf to it. Which can never be done by the induſtry of the creature: on the contrary, the creature ſuffereth it even with regret: becauſe, as I have ſaid, man loveth ſo ſtrongly his own will, and dreadeth ſo much its deſtruction that if God did not do it himſelf, and with authority, man would never conſent to it.

To this it may be anſwered me that God never taketh from man his liberty, and that thus he can always reſiſt God: from whence it followeth, that I ought not to ſay that God acteth abſolutely, and without the conſent of man. That this may be done, and yet the entire freedom and liberty of the will not be violated, I explain myſel

myſelf and ſay, that it ſufficeth then that man give a paſſive conſent, becauſe that having given up himſelf to God, at the beginning of his Chriſtian courſe, that God might do with him and in him, whatever he would, he gave then an active and general conſent to whatever *God* ſhould do. But when *God* deſtroyeth, burneth, and purifieth, the ſoul ſeeth not that this is advantageous to it, but believeth rather the contrary; and even as the fire ſeemeth at firſt to ſoil the gold, ſo this operation ſeemeth to rob the ſoul of its purity. So that if an active and explicit conſent were then needful, the ſoul would have difficulty to give it, and very often it would not give it at all. The moſt the ſoul doth, is to keep itſelf in a paſſive conſent, ſuffering as well as it can this operation, which it neither *can* nor *will* hinder.

Therefore God purifieth in ſuch wiſe the ſoul from all its own operations and the workings of ſelf, which make it ſo very unlike him, that in fine he renders it by little and little, conformable to himſelf; exalting the paſſive capacity of the creature, enlarging it, and enobling it; though after an hidden and unknown manner, which is hence called myſtical. But it is neceſſary that in all theſe operations the ſoul concur paſſively. It is true, that in the beginning before it cometh to this, it muſt be more active; and then, according as the divine operation groweth ſtronger, the ſoul muſt gradually and ſucceſſively yield and give way unto God, until it be perfectly abſorpt in him. But this is a long while effecting.

We do not then ſay (as ſome have believed) that there is no nee

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to pass through action; since, on the contrary, this is the very gate: but only that one must not always dwell there, seeing man ought to tend to the perfection of his end; but he can never arrive at it without quitting the first helps and means; which, though necessary to introduce him into this way, would greatly retard his progress, and if obstinately persisted in would hinder him from arriving at his end. This is what St. Paul did: *I leave* (saith he) Phil. iii. 14. *that which is behind, and I endeavour to advance forward, that so I may finish my course.*

Would not they say, that a person had lost his senses, if having undertaken a journey, he would stop at the first inn, because he was certainly informed that several have passed that way, that some have lodged there, and that the master

of the house dwells there? All that we wish for then from people is, that they go on still towards their end; that they take the shortest and easiest way; that they do not stop at the first place they come to; and that following the counsel of St. Paul, they leave themselves to be moved and led by the spirit of grace, who will conduct them to the end for which they were created, which is, to enjoy God.

None can be ignorant, that the sovereign good is *God*; that essential happiness consisteth in the union with *God*; that the saints are more or less glorified, according as this union is more or less perfect; and that this union cannot be made in the soul by any activity of its own, since God does not communicate himself to the soul, but in proportion as its passive capacity is enlarged. No one can be united

ed to God without paſſiveneſs, and ſimplicity; and this union being the beatitude itſelf, the way or method which conducts us into this paſſiveneſs cannot be evil; on the contrary, it is preferable to all other.

This way is in no wiſe dangerous; if it were, would *Jeſus Chriſt* have made it the moſt perfect and the moſt neceſſary of all ways? All can walk in it; and as all are called to bleſſedneſs, all are alſo called to enjoy God both in this life and in the next; foraſmuch as the *enjoyment of God* conſtitutes our bleſſedneſs or happineſs. I ſay, of *God himſelf*, and not of his gifts; which could never make the eſſential bleſſedneſs, nor be capable of giving full contentment and ſatisfaction to the ſoul. For the ſoul is ſo noble and ſo magnificent, that all the gifts of God, even the great-

eſt, could not render it happy, if God do not give himſelf unto it. Now God's whole deſire is to give himſelf unto his creature, according to the capacity which he hath placed in it: and yet, alas! Men are afraid to ſurrender themſelves to God! They are afraid to poſſeſs him, and to diſpoſe themſelves for the divine union.

Some ſay, that none ought to put themſelves into it of themſelves. I grant it. And I ſay alſo, that no creature can ever do this, ſince there is not a creature in the world that is able to unite itſelf to God by all its own efforts: it muſt be God that muſt unite it to himſelf. If therefore one cannot be united to God by ones ſelf, it is to cry out againſt a chimera, to cry out againſt them who put themſelves into it of themſelves.

Theſe will ſay, that ſome do feign

feign themſelves to be in it. I ſay that this cannot be feigned; for he who dieth of hunger cannot feign, eſpecially for a long time, that he is in perfect fulneſs. There will eſcape from him always ſome deſire, or longing, by which he will ſoon diſcover that he is very far from his end.

Since therefore no man can enter into his end, except he be placed therein, our concern here is not to introduce any one into it, but to ſhew them the way which leadeth thither; and at the ſame time to beſeech and conjure them, that they would not keep themſelves tied up, and fixed to any means or exerciſes, which muſt be quitted when the ſignal is given; which is known and underſtood by the *experienced* teacher, who ſheweth the living water, and endeavoureth to introduce into it. And

would

would it not be a cruelty that deſerves to be puniſhed, to ſhew a ſpring to a thirſty man, but then to keep him bound, and hinder him from going to it, leaving him to die with thirſt? Yet this is what is uſually done at this day. Let us all agree in the way, as we agree in the end, whereof none can doubt without error. The way hath its *beginning*, its *progreſs*, and its *end* or mark. The more one advanceth towards the mark, the more of neceſſity he departeth from the beginning: and it is impoſſible to arrive at the mark or end, but by departing continually farther from the beginning; no one being able to go from a gate to a diſtant place without paſſing through the intermediate ſpace. This is inconteſtable. If the end be good, holy, and neceſſary, and if the gate be good, why ſhall

the

the way which cometh from this gate, and leadeth directly to this end, be evil? O the blindneſs of the greateſt part of mēn, who value themſelves for their learning and wit! O how true is it, my *God*, that *thou haſt hidden thy ſecrets from the great and from the wiſe, to reveal them to the little ones!*

LETTERS.

LETTERS.

LETTER I.

Madam GUION to Mr. B. of LONDON.

In which is a beautiful illuſtration, from the ſimilitude of a Tulip-Root.

"YOU deſire that God ſhould be the principal and only motive of your inclinations and actions, but this you will never attain to by (mere) vocal prayers, it is attainable only by a long and inde-

indefatigable perſeverance in mental prayer; which you muſt continue by the eaſy means you have taken, and it will come by degrees. You ſee we cannot ſilence ourſelves when we pleaſe, it is God that gives us this ſtate of mind; * all that we can do on our part is, ſtrenuouſly to *recollect ourſelves*, and reunite (as *David* ſays) *all the powers of our ſoul in the Lord.* † And when the ſoul is thus gathered within itſelf and recollected, it may addreſs itſelf to its God in ſome little affectionate breathings of the heart, juſt as they come in the mind, and afterwards keep in a ſilent reſpect before him; and now and then renew its affections if it finds a facility in doing it, if not, let it be altogether ſilent. God

* Prov. xvi. 1. *The preparations of the heart of man, &c. are from the Lord.*

† Pſal. ciii. 1.

God has two ways of silencing the soul; the one by giving it *inwardly a taste of his presence* (but this taste is pure, simple, general;) the other by making it *feel in itself a certain dryness* or *inability* of producing these acts of affection; and in that case we ought to remain before God in a spirit of faith and absolute resignation, leaving ourselves entirely to our Lord to deal with us as he pleases. All depends upon the perseverance; never therefore cease from prayer, although you think you do nothing in it, for at that time your humble patience is infinitely well pleasing to God; nay *it is then* that God operates most in your soul, though in a manner hidden and unknown to your senses. This manner of prayer is not subject to delusion or enthusiasm for faith embraces the whole and does not expect, or desire any thing

hing for itſelf. This faith has but one object, which is God, his glory and his good pleaſure, which it prefers to all ſelf-intereſts, and this it is that produces the pure love which loves the *whole of God*, both what he is, and for the ſake of himſelf, without any regard to what we ourſelves are.

The *ſilence* which ſome perſons profeſs and recommend, is vaſtly wide of this; they are people that keep themſelves ſtill, purely in *expectation of ſome light, ſome ſpeech*, or ome new *ſentiment*, and thus not eeking God for himſelf; they are xpoſed to the enemy, who deeives them by giving them a thouand extraordinary things, which re very far from the way we peak of, which is ſimple, humble, ttle; which expects nothing as elieving it merits nothing; and hich is perſuaded that every thing

extraordinary is an obſtacle to the *pure* enjoyment of God. Continue therefore and perſevere in your prayer be it barren or fruitful, hard or eaſy, all is equal to him who wills only the will of God; and who comes to God, only that God may do with him according to his pleaſure. It would be a deplorable inſtance of inconſtancy to be varying from this way under pretence that we muſt proceed now on this faſhion, now on another. God *proves* the fidelity of the ſoul by theſe *viciſſitudes*, as he does by temptations and the fear of miſtaking; but provided you humbly perſevere you have nothing to fear for the devil can take no hold o you: but thoſe who deſire extraordinary *gifts* and *favours* become the ſport of devils.

I do not doubt but there hav been and now are, among th abov

above mentioned, many well-meaning people, who by their credulity have left themſelves open to deluſion; for the natural man always loves the marvellous, he would fain ſee, feel, know and diſcern, either his own operations, or thoſe of ſome foreign agent; and this may deceive him. But he that humbly continues before God, not waiting in expectation of any thing, as well knowing he merits nothing, but is content with whatever God pleaſes to do, or not to do, in him or with him, is highly well pleaſing to God.

I think we ought always to have ſome outward buſineſs that is innocent, for the mind of man is not capable of a continued introverſion and abſtraction; and when we begin too eagerly, it ſeldom laſts. We muſt amuſe our ſenſes *like children*, with things that are in-

nocent in themſelves; and this lit-
tle, humble, procedure, will draw
down upon us the tender mercies
of our God: who has told us that
unleſs we become as little children, we
ſhall not enter into the kingdom of hea-
ven. Violence in this caſe, if it
be too ſtrong and too continual
will ruin our health, and deprive
us of the deſigns of God, who does
all his works after a manner wor-
thy of himſelf, though it is true
he does not make our ſenſes privy
to them. Of this we may ſee many
inſtances in nature. The root of
a tulip, hid in the ground, ſeems to
be but a very inſignificant thing;
yet when the ſeaſon is come, it
produces a flower of various co-
lours, and very beautiful to the eye.
If a man that had heard of a tulip,
but had never ſeen one, ſhould be
told that that bulb would produce
ſo beautiful a flower, he would
ſcarc

ſcarce believe it; and if through his impatience he would be often taking up his tulip root out of the earth to ſee the proceſs, whether it began to ſhoot or no, he would certainly incapacitate it for putting forth and producing this excellent flower. And, thus it is with us,* when we will be *ſeeing*, *diſcerning*, and *knowing* WHAT God operates in us, we only hinder his work. There is nothing wanting on our part but *fidelity*, *patience*, *ſubmiſſion*, and *abſolute reſignation* to our divine gardiner; who in his own time will let us ſee the wonderful things he hath wrought in us, while we thought ourſelves poor, miſerable, and deſtitute of all good.

Our failings and miſeries ſhould

 not

* Mark iv. 26. *So is the kingdom of God, as if a man ſhould caſt ſeed into the ground.*— Eccleſ. xi. 4. *He that obſerveth the wind ſhall not ſow; and he that regardeth the clouds, ſhall not reap.*

not keep us from prayer, but o
the contrary, we ſhould then go t
God, and ſay to him with an hum
ble grief, " My God! behold wha
I am capable of; if thou leave m
to myſelf, I ſhall ſtill do worſe
my whole dependence is upon th
grace; for of myſelf I am nothin
but miſery and ſin." A little chil
that is fallen in the dirt, you ſee
comes immediately to its mothe
who makes it clean, and eve
wipes away the tears from its eyes
and thus God deals with us, whe
we fall thro' frailty; if we preſent
ly return to him with all our heart
David who knew the neceſſity o
acting thus, in this caſe, ſays t
God, " *Waſh me and I ſhall be clean*
purge me and I ſhall be whiter tha
ſnow." It is the blood of the Lamb
without ſpot that can make us pure
and he will do it when we return
to him in an humble confuſion fo
ou

our miſeries. There is nothing in this of extraordinary performances nor high flights; what I mean is, the pure prayer of the heart.

Take courage and follow the little path, I have here ſhewn you, without aſpiring to greater things; for be aſſured, it is nothing but a paſſion for our own excellency, that makes us ſo forward to change our courſe, or to advance of ourſelves, according to our own fond conceptions, whereby inſtead of proceeding we go backward, and oftentimes looſe all by graſping at too much.

I pray God to illuminate, and give you to underſtand this letter. I muſt however warn you (it is of the utmoſt conſequence) to die to all ſpiritual *ſenſibilities* and curious enquiries, that ſo you may enter into an implicit faith, *which believeth all things*

*things**—for your will muſt die to all taſtes and ſentiments, by a continual reſignation, receiving and acquieſcing in that inwardly, which God gives or does not give, and in that outwardly, which happens to us from moment to moment by the hand of providence; and ſo accuſtom yourſelf never to will that which you have not. Upon the practice of this continual ſubmiſſion of the will to God, depends all the progreſs of the ſpiritual life, and the good of the ſoul: this is *that* which will give you a perfect repoſe in the will of God: this is *that* which our Lord Jeſus Chriſt hath bid us pray for, *thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.* It is done in heaven without reſiſtance, and without reluctance. All the outward works that we can do, be they what they will, will not, cannot,

* 1 Cor. xiii. 7.

cannot, advance us, as this *total* and *continual* ſubmiſſion of our will to the divine, moſt infallibly will. It is this renunciation of ourſelves that Jeſus Chriſt taught us, viz. to ſubmit continually our *reaſon* to *faith* and our will to God. And this is what I require of you, that you ſimply enter into this courſe: which you ſee is a work of time.— Faith brings us back to our own nothingneſs, and by our not being any thing, leaves God to be all that he is in himſelf and for himſelf. Love is the conſequence of faith: the more ſimple and naked the faith is, the more pure is the love: and on the other hand, faith is the conſequence of love; the more perfect love is, the more perfect is faith. In the way of which I here ſpeak and have wrote ſo much, we are ſcreened from the *angel of darkneſs, who can transform himſelf into an angel*

gel of light: but not into an angel of love. Let us descend by love faith, humility: keeping ourselves in our own nothingness, and we need not fear falling. I require of you in the name of God, that you preserve an inviolable attachment to this way, without *wavering*. I assure you, that they who pursue this method are founded upon the living *rock*, *Christ Jesus*. The devil puts doubts and uncertainties into the soul, in order to make it fickle and *inconstant*, and to keep it from persevering, because he knows great good will accrue to the soul thereby, and that this divests him of all his right and power over it. Wherefore he stirs up all the world to prevent, if possible, any one's following Jesus Christ in this path, which he himself traced out to us.

April, 1714.

LETTER II.

Madam GUION to Mrs. T. of LONDON.

YOUR letter, my moſt dear ſiſter in our Lord, gave me ſuch an intimacy with your heart, as very much rejoiced me. I would not have you wonder, that you have not the ſweet recollection you formerly had, and that perceptible preſence which God gives in the *beginnings* to thoſe he would draw to himſelf. When once he has ſettled them in his love, and made their heart ſure to him, he ſevers them from all this to make them walk in faith and in the croſs. This firſt eſtate is *that of milk*, which St. Paul ſpeaks of, and the

the ſecond is the *bread of ſtrong men.* In the firſt God gives many teſtimonies of his love: in the ſecond he requires proofs of yours. He deals with us after this manner for many reaſons. *Firſt,* to the intent we may not be wedded to any conſolation, but purely and nakedly to him alone, and thereby, as we ought, follow Jeſus Chriſt, by the way of the croſs. A *ſecond* reaſon is, becauſe ſelf-love nouriſhes itſelf with thoſe things, though we do not perceive it. A *third* reaſon is, to make us walk in naked and obſcure faith, and in a love of God pure and diſengaged of all ſelf-intereſt, loving him above *all gifts and recompenſes,* not willing any thing of God for ourſelves but *his moſt holy will,* and not deſiring any thing but purely *his glory,* even when it is to our own coſt. But the *principal reaſon* is to draw

draw us *out of ourſelves*, and make us die to all that is of the *old man*, that ſo we may be cloathed, animated and vivified by the new man. Faith deprives us of all created light, whether it be of reaſon or laboured explanations of the pure and naked truth; without which faith, we ſhall never be renewed and regenerated. The pure ove of God deſtroys in us all orts of affections and deſires, all wills, taſtes and ſentiments, to the nd we may receive no impreſſions ut from the will of God alone. This is the *faith* which worketh rue poverty of ſpirit, and this is he *love* which ſeparates us from all hings, and from ourſelves;— ccount yourſelf happy then inaſnuch as God treats you as he did is own Son, who in the extremeſt utward ſufferings was in the moſt xtreme inward deſolations, when

he cried out, *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me.* All devotion which does not tend to make us conformable to Jeſus Chriſt, I am a little ſuſpicious of; but where I ſee the croſs and deſolation, it fills my heart with joy.

I own it is a hard leſſon to be bound to hear all the trifling diſcourſes of the creatures. We ought *patiently to bear* all which belongs to our ſtate, or that comes to us by providence; but where we can avoid converſation, we ſhould do all we can to ſhun it. Solitude is indeed highly agreeable to the heart that loves God, but when we are debarred of it by providence, and not of choice, we ſhould bear with patience, and for the love of him, what thoſe things ſeem to deprive us of. The true tendenc

tendency which God gives to a heart loving him is *ſimplicity* and *littleneſs*. He is not truly honoured but by *children*, and *they* only *render him perfect praiſe*. I am very glad that you have an inclination for littleneſs.

When ſhall we be ſo little as not to perceive ourſelves, nor be remarkable to others; when ſhall we be all infantine! I own to you, that all that is great in religion, does not ſuit me; ah! but the infancy gives me great pleaſure. I never think myſelf well but with thoſe that are, or are willing to become, children.

I pray, God may be all things to you, and that he himſelf, and *not his gifts*, may be your ſtrength and your ſup-

port; believe me in him truely your's: desiring with all my heart, that we may be united in him, for time and eternity.

July 24, 1714.

Tw

Two LETTERS,

CONCERNING

A Life truly Christian.

AND,

A Discourse upon the *universal* love and goodness of God to mankind, in and through Jesus Christ.

Extracted from two late Authors.

LETTER I.

Concerning a Life truly Christian.

IF we read the holy scriptures, and if the holy spirit gives us the understanding of what we read,

we ſhall find that God deſires nothing ſo much, as to communicate himſelf to men, to dwell in them as in his true temple, and to have (humanly ſpeaking) as familiar an intercourſe with them, nay, with greater intimacy and confidence, than a huſband hath with his ſpouſe, whom he loves tenderly, and with whom he ſhares his heart, and the goods he poſſeſſes. This the holy ſcriptures are full of, eſpecially the writings of St. *John*, and the *Song of Songs*;—*Wiſdom delights to be*, OR TO ABIDE, *with the children of men*, Prov. viii. 31. 'Tis therefore a treaſure, and an honour we ought to aſpire after, to become experimentally *acquainted* with the monarch of the univerſe, our good God, who is love itſelf. It is in and by an intimate commerce with our God and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, that we acquire thoſe inclinations

clinations, and learn to love and practiſe quite naturally, and without labour, what he loved and practiſed: who from an exceſs of love for us, aſſumed the human nature; not to enjoy its gratifications and pleaſures, its honours, riches, and grandeur in this world; but to be deſpiſed, to live in poverty, to lead a ſuffering and hidden life, and at laſt to die on the croſs, filled with ignominy and the bittereſt pains, and all this out of love for us: we muſt then, from a reciprocal love, follow a God who hath ſo much love for us.---It is in and by an intimate commerce with him, that we are made *partakers of the divine nature*, 2 Pet. i. 4. that we *put off the old man*, our old inclinations, and earthly and carnal affections; and that we require the grace to become citizens of heaven, even in this world. Phil. iii. 20.

20.—But a great many ſouls that deſire to love and ſerve God, give themſelves much trouble, labour hard and long, without advancing, for want of taking the right road to arrive thereat.—The place where we may find our Lord Jeſus Chriſt (who is the *light* or *gift of God* to *every* man*) is our own *heart*. The *kingdom of God*, where he dwelleth, is *within* us, ſays, Jeſus Chriſt. (Luke 17.) This is the place where we may infallibly meet this faithful friend and guide: it is no where elſe. " O! how are " numbers of ſouls to be pitied, " who from the beginning of their " life to the end, make not one " ſtep in the way of the ſpirit; " ſeeking God without, when they " have him within themſelves. " —St. Auſtin complained of this, " with reſpect to himſelf. *Lord I*

" *went*

* John i. 9.

" *went wandering like a ſtrayed ſheep,*
" *ſeeking thee with anxious reaſoning*
" *without, whilſt thou waſt within me;*
" *I wearied myſelf much in looking for*
" *thee without, and yet thou haſt thy*
" *habitation within me, if I long and*
" *breath after thee. I went round the*
" *ſtreets and places of the city of this*
" *world, ſeeking thee: and found thee*
" *not; becauſe in vain I ſought with-*
" *out for him, who was within myſelf.*"
(Solilogy, chap. 31.)

The way or means to find *Chriſt in us*, (Col. i. 27.) is the prayer of the heart: for this is a capital truth, CHRIST IN US. AND HIS MANIFESTATION IN US, IS THE BASIS OF CHRISTIANITY. It is known only to thoſe who are ſo happy as to experience it, that this truth is as real as it is unknown to thoſe who do not experience it, who know God and religion, and all divine things, only by the way of

of reaſoning and ſpeculation. Hence it comes that we ſee ſo little real fruit among Chriſtians, who never theleſs know very well how to ſpeak and reaſon about religious matters and have a great deal of knowledge. This comes from their not having learned to *love*, without which all the reſt is but a vain ſcience. You may ſay perhaps, But how does one learn to love God —It is my greateſt trouble that I do not love him enough. I anſwer however, that prayer is the propereſt means: But by the word prayer, little elſe is underſtood by moſt people, but *vocal prayer*, or the *words* that we addreſs to God —I think it neceſſary to explain this matter a little. Our Lord tells us, that *we ought to pray always* (Luke xviii. 1.) and St. Paul ſays *pray without ceaſing* (1 Theſſ. v. 17.) and alſo in another place, *that we know*

not what to pray for as we ought, but the ſpirit itſelf maketh interceſſion for us with groans that cannot be uttered, Rom. viii. 26. Our Lord ſays, *Uſe not many words, as the Heathens do, who think they ſhall be heard for their much ſpeaking*. (Mat. vi. 7.) Theſe inſtructions, *to pray without ceaſing, and not to uſe many words in our prayers*, would contradict each other, if prayer conſiſted only of words, either by form, or even extempore only; which could not be performed *continually* or *without ceaſing*.—*Prayer* then, muſt be ſome other thing, if it can or ought to be *continual*; and that which we have juſt ſpoke of, (which is very good, provided it is uſed with moderation) is but one *kind* of *prayer*. I take it then that prayer in itſelf is an inclination of the heart towards him, who is the object we deſire to love. It is an action of

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the heart, which is altogether natural to man; for it is natural to the heart to love, and to incline towards the object of its love. We love inceſſantly; and though we lay hold on different objects on which we beſtow our love, ſometimes on one, and ſometimes on another, and moſt commonly on ourſelves, who are our principal end, and to which we would refer every other thing; yet we *always* love, and experience by our inconſtancy, and by the little ſatisfaction we find in the objects we chooſe, that our hearts want to be filled with ſomething more excellent than all the creatures together, and that it is God alone in whom this fulneſs and ſatisfaction are to be found.—Therefore in order to pray aright, one needs only turn away his heart from all the creatures and himſelf, and bend it to-

wards God; and this sweet exercise may be performed continually, and without *labour*. There is none necessary in order to remain quiet in the presence of a friend in whom we perfectly confide; now and then we speak to him, then we are silent; afterwards we look at him, and with gladness and satisfaction enjoy his presence, we possess him, and it is satisfaction enough to us to know that he is present. Let us thus behave towards God; though our senses do neither see nor comprehend him, we know that he is always present, filling all things; but after a particular manner, he is in the hearts of all those to whom he has already given the grace to desire to love him. This grace, if but very weak and imperfect, is from him, and is his operation, and none of ours, who *are not able of ourselves to have one good thought*. Let us be persuaded that

God is more nearer to us than we are to ourſelves. Let us accuſtom ourſelves to do all our actions in his preſence, and for the love of him. Let us offer up to him with an inward glance of our ſoul, all that we do, think and ſpeak. Thus ſhall we accuſtom ourſelves by degrees *to walk in his preſence.* Moreover let us uſe the means which by experience we find to be moſt efficacious for recalling the remembrance of God, and awakening his love in our hearts. And as ſoon as we perceive a forgetfulneſs of God, let us return to him inwardly and calmly, without troubling or diſquieting ourſelves. When we commit faults, let us have recourſe immediately to him; let neither fear nor ſhame hinder us from preſenting ourſelves before him, how filthy and impure ſoever we feel ourſelves to be. Let us

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uſe ſuch reading as may draw us to him: the holy ſcripture is the book of books: there are others which may be a great help: we are ſenſible enough of thoſe which inflame the heart and nouriſh it, which is always preferable to what fills the mind with images and ideas, which often conſume the heart inſtead of feeding it. By this procedure we form a commerce in our inward man with God, which by degrees becomes continual, by frequently addreſſing him with the mouth or in ſpirit, ſome little word, and laying open before him with confidence our preſent diſpoſition and ſtate, as to a moſt faithful friend, either by a ſingle ſigh, or barely looking up to him.—If we apply ourſelves to this holy exerciſe of walking and living in his preſence, of ſpeaking to him rather with the *heart* than the *mouth*, though *vocal*

prayer is very commendable too at certain times, *when we find it ſuits our preſent ſtate:* if we do this, we ſhall ſoon find a great change in ourſelves; that the love of God ſhall take poſſeſſion of our hearts, and diſengage us more and more from ourſelves and the creatures. The whole buſineſs conſiſts in turning away, the moſt we can, our thoughts, from every thing that is not God; employing ourſelves quietly and calmly with God preſent, without pretending to form diſtinct ideas of him. Thus ſhall we be made capable, and diſpoſed to receive a thouſand graces and favours from him. This attention does not conſiſt in expecting to hear ſome extraordinary voice with our bodily ears.—God does not ſpeak after that manner, his language is to the heart.—The change of inclinatio ns deſires and affections,

tions, which we experience by degrees, from earthly and carnal, to become more and more heavenly and divine, is the language of Chriſt in us: he creates and operates what he ſpeaks, all at the ſame time; we do not hear his voice with our ears, but we experience the effects of it.—He loves *ſilence*, *retirement*, and *recollection*. In this diſpoſition he makes himſelf manifeſt to, and felt by the heart, in a manner incomprehenſible to human reaſon. *There* he teaches us inwardly, in ſo real and efficacious a manner, that when we experience it, we perceive that all the voices that ſtrike our ſenſes outwardly, however good, have not the efficacy, the reality of what we experience within us. Therefore it is that our Lord ſaith, Matt. 23. *One is your teacher*. It is becauſe his voice alone is able to operate in us what he teaches us.

It may be objected, if ſo it be that the voice of God, or what they would have us to believe to be ſuch, is not a voice which one hears with his bodily ears, why do they ſo earneſtly recommend *ſilence*, *retirement*, *recollection*, and to avoid the diſtractions of the mind? What matters it what the ſenſes be employed about? I anſwer, that though the voice of God to the ſoul, doth not with its ſound ſtrike the ſenſes, yet it requires recollection, and avoiding diſtractions, if it is to operate with efficacy in our hearts; becauſe the diſtractions and diſſipation of the ſenſes among various objects, are the very things which draw away the *will* and the *love*, and beget an attachment to thoſe objects which the ſenſes preſent to us; they are the windows of the ſoul, and the gates by which the creatures enter into it. Therefore,

fore, as *ſoon* as the ſoul has a deſire of being converted to God, and of loving him with all its powers; it feels within itſelf an inclination and bias to *retirement*, in order to turn itſelf freely, and without interruption towards its God; and to follow the good motions he vouchſafes, and what the conſcience dictates to be the things that draw it to him, and diſengage it from the creatures: theſe are the effects of what he operates or ſpeaks in the bottom of the heart: his language is conformable to his ſpiritual nature, and makes itſelf to be underſtood by our ſpirit, which is alſo of the ſame nature;—*God is ſpirit, and the true worſhippers worſhip him in ſpirit*, John 3. The more we advance in the ways of God, and follow the good motions of his ſpirit in our hearts, the more is this matter unfolded, and the *hidden man*

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of the heart, (1 Pet. iii. 4.) made manifeſt, which is as it were buried in the ſenſes, as long as they have dominion over us. Therefore it hath been the practice of all the ſaints in all ages to mortify their ſenſes.—And every ſaint in every age hath teſtified, that it is *our own experience alone* that can explain to us what that life of the ſpirit is, of which St. Paul ſpeaks when he ſays, (Rom. 8.) *They that are after the fleſh, do mind the things of the fleſh, and they that are after the ſpirit the things of the ſpirit.*

MAY 14, 1735.

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LETTER II.

Describing some of the temptations which attend a life truly Christian.

"THAT which hinders the progress of the divine life in most well disposed persons, is, their resting too much not only in externals, but more especially in that which is *internal*, namely, the sentiments, consolations, and fervours, which God communicates for encouraging young beginners to walk in the way of *self denial*, and to pass on further. God gives them these sensibilities, not that they may rest in them, but in order to their further progress: he gives them because of our want of faith and confidence in him, above all these

theſe ſweetneſſes; to which we muſt abſolutely die, if we would attain the *true good.* Souls in that ſtate knowing nothing better, and more profound, God withdraws thoſe ſenſibilities after a certain ſpace of time; in which the ſoul ought to have acquired ſtrength and courage enough to abandon herſelf to the conduct of God; which is what he propoſes by withdrawing all thoſe conſolations and fervours that allure and render her ſenſual and dainty. But when the ſoul is deprived thereof, ſhe ſuppoſes all is loſt. Many drawback at this time, and return to the love of this preſent evil world: others ſtop ſhort for want of courage, who continue languiſhing all their life long, without *entering into the true reſt promiſed to the children of God* (Heb. iv. 5) always in anguiſh, vexation, and uncertainty. Others entirely

entirely neglect *internal* prayer, and content themſelves to live like other folks, and look upon all that formerly paſt within them like unto pleaſant *dreams*; and conſider others, who ſtill enjoy theſe ſweet conſolations and lively ſentiments, as harmleſs, innocent people, but of weak underſtanding, whom they pity. All this proceeds from their not having at the beginning laid a good foundation, and ſet out in the only *path* that leads to God: I mean, living by *faith* and reſignation to God; entirely ſurrendering themſelves into his hands without preſcribing any terms. This is that good foundation, which cannot be ſhaken; namely, the unreſerved ſurrendering ourſelves into the hands of God; willing nothing but *him*, and the accompliſhment of his will; renouncing all conſolations and ſelf-gratifications,

ons, both outward and inward, accepting as it were by the by, without reſting in them, all thoſe that the divine bounty ſhall think fit to give; valuing nothing but him, and willing nothing but his *will*. This is the ſelf-denied life which will infallibly conduct us to the true good, or the *manifeſtation of Jeſus Chriſt in us*.—When it pleaſes God to drain this ſource of conſolations, that nouriſhed the ſoul for a time, and filled her with courage to combat and deſpiſe the world and all earthly things; when I ſay, all this forſakes us, and nothing ſucceeds but languiſhment, weakneſs and averſion to continue in that courſe of life, which we had embraced with ſo much eagerneſs and reliſh; finding nothing now in ourſelves to ſupply the place of thoſe ſenſibilities which are withdrawn from us, the ſoul knows not

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where ſhe is; and as I ſaid, all that is paſt ſeems to her like a pleaſant dream: the enemy at the ſame time conſpiring with her reaſon, diſcovers to her many exceſſes into which ſhe has given, intoxicated as ſhe was with the heat of her zeal, and makes her to call in queſtion the whole of Chriſtian experience.—She knows not what to do: all is diſguſting and weariſome to her. O! how dangerous is this rock, againſt which many have ſtruck, and been fatally ſhipwrecked! Many fall here into libertiniſm, if their conſtitution inclines thereunto: for having already ſeen the inſufficiency of all outward forms of worſhip, they now find nothing therein to ſupport themſelves; and the enemy making them likewiſe to ſuſpect the internal ways, the truth and reality of which is obſcured and hid from

them at this time, they fall into licentiouſneſs, and become, or are in danger of becoming Atheiſts; or elſe are in danger of falling a prey to ſeducing ſpirits, that fail not to offer themſelves both inwardly and outwardly, promiſing liberty, tho' themſelves are the ſlaves of Satan, or of their own ſpirit. *Reaſon* is the moſt dangerous enemy at this time, to thoſe, who before their converſion led a wiſe and virtuous life according to the world: and it eaſily draws the ſoul into its ancient way of living, making her to ſhut the gate againſt all the internal *attractions* of the ſpirit of grace, which diſturb and diſquiet her, and are deſigned to make her ſenſible by the trouble they excite that ſhe is in no good ſtate.—*Theſe* are ſome of the dreadful dangers and temptations that aſſault the ſoul in this ſtate: they cannot al

all be deſcribed, becauſe of their diverſity and number.—How many doubts, diſquiets, fears and terrors, do aſſault the poor ſoul! On the other hand, with what levity and raſhneſs is ſhe tempted to plunge headlong into the world, into libertiniſm; and to give wing to her paſſions that had been reſtrained for a time. Who is able to eſcape ſo great a danger! God alone can defend and ſecretly ſupport us, who never fails to do it, provided the ſoul doth but even feebly look unto him; for he hath promiſed to *ſtrengthen the feeble knees, and that the bruiſed reed he will not break.* —He mercifully reclaims her, though ſhe have gone aſtray for ſome time, from which few, very few, are altogether exempt, and many remain bewildered, wandering hither and thither, without

finding the peace and repoſe they ſeek after for many years: but God brings them again into the right way, by ſome violent temptation, or extraordinary accident, which incites them a new to have recourſe to God, who alone can help and deliver, and give them ſolid peace.—Thoſe are infallibly ſafe, who, under this ſtate of uncertainty, ſo painful and troubleſome to bear, remain in peace and tranquility, without *undertaking* or *altering* any thing in their conduct or ſtate: for they are not in a condition to ſee clearly: all is darkneſs or obſcurity—therefore cannot but miſtake and fail in any thing they undertake during that period. They are bleſſed indeed! to whom God at this time ſends ſome *experienced* perſon, who hath himſelf paſſed theſe dangerous ſtreights, and has been ſaved from being ſhip-

ſhipwrecked therein, who is capable of giving proper counſel, provided they are humble, and willing to accept it. The beſt advice for this ſtate is this. "*Be patient, remain in peace, ſtillneſs and tranquility, amidſt all your trouble, anxiety, and inconſtancy: purſue not any of thoſe things to which your diſpoſition to inquietude, impatience, and the like, would hurry you: wait patiently for the aſſiſtance of our bleſſed Lord, and ſupport the delay of it, without ſeeking after, or accepting any pretended help that may offer from any other quarter.*" This is a painful leſſon for nature, which is ſo much the more ſo, becauſe the ſoul doth not perceive it is to God that ſhe reſigns herſelf, but is afraid, and believes rather that it is owing to its own negligence, ſtupidity and ſloth, that all this is fallen upon her. But whoſoever will be courageous enough to ſurrender him-

ſelf up to God, in ſilence and reſignation, ſuffering and bearing all the inward burnings and remorſes that torment him: *perſevering* to wait patiently, expecting help from no other but God, ſhould ſuch a one *die in this* ſtate, he would find the favour and unexpected help of our adorable Jeſus, to whom be honour and glory throughout all eternity. Amen.

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UPON THE

Univerſal Love and goodneſs of God to Mankind in and through Jeſus Chriſt.

IT is the fundamental doctrine, or rather the *known* foundation of all *revealed* religion, and the *unknown* foundation of all natural piety and goodneſs, that Jeſus Chriſt is the *Second Adam*.

That a real birth, life, and nature, is in the ſame *reality* derived to us

us from this our ſecond Adam, as is derived to us from our firſt Adam. And that as without any figure or metaphor, we are all ſaid to be born of *Adam*, and deſcended from him; ſo we are all really and not figuratively born of our ſecond Adam, and have our deſcent from him. And herein is ſeen the infinite depth of divine love and goodneſs to mankind, who though they were by the condition of their creation to be derived from one *head* or *parent*, and take his ſtate of perfection or imperfection; yet were by the goodneſs and care of God for them, provided from the very beginning, with a ſecond *parent*, or common *head*, who after the *fall* of the firſt, and the fallen ſtate that he had brought upon his poſterity, ſhould be a *common reſtorer*, and put it in every man's power to have the ſame choice

choice of life and death, as the firſt man had; that ſo, they who were loſt before they were born, and were made inheritors of a miſerable nature without their choice, might have a divine life reſtored to them in a *ſecond* parent, which ſhould not be in the power of any one to loſe for them, but ſhould depend entirely upon their *own will* and *deſire of it*, upon their *own faith*, and *hope*, and *hungering* after it.

This eternal and immutable truth, worthy of being written in capital letters of gold; is ſuch as is ſufficient to make all men rejoice and give praiſe to God. For by this truth, all that ſeems hard and cruel to human reaſon, that the poſterity of *Adam* ſhould be involved in the conſequences of their firſt father's fall, is made a wonderful ſcene of love.—There

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is ſomething ſo amazingly loving and merciful in this conduct of divine providence over mankind, that it has ſurely enough in it, if once known, to make revealed religion the joy, and comfort, and deſire of every man's heart. That Jeſus Chriſt is thus the Saviour and univerſal Redeemer of all mankind, that he is this *Second Adam*, or parent, reſtoring *Adam* himſelf, and in him all mankind to a poſſibility of being born again; and that revealed religion *began* with the *declaration* of this redemption, and has revealed nothing but for the ſake and ſupport of it, is a truth ſufficiently atteſted by ſcripture.

The declaration which God made to *Adam* immediately after his *fall*, of a *ſeed of the woman to bruiſe the ſerpent's head*, was a declaration of *pardon* and *redemption* to *Adam*, and in him to all mankind; for

for what he ſaid to *Adam*, that he ſaid to all that were in the loins of *Adam*; who, as they fell in his fall, before they were born, without the poſſibility of any one man's being exempted from it; ſo were they all put into this ſtate of pardon and redemption before they were born, without the poſſibility of any one man's being excluded, or left out of it.

Every ſon of *Adam* is in the ſame covenant with God that *Adam* was, and has the ſame *bruiſer* of the ſerpent as *near* to him, as he was to *Adam*, and declared to be his Redeemer, in the ſame degree as he was declared to be the Redeemer of *Adam*. And who would ſeek for arguments againſt ſuch a Saviour? Or who would cavil at a *revealed religion*, that has no other beginning or end, but to reveal an *univerſal redemption*? Or who can enough call upon

upon the creation, heaven and earth, angels and men, and every thing that hath breath, to praiſe the Lord, for ſuch ſalvation? This declaration of God to *Adam*, of his pardon, and redemption by the ſeed of the woman, is not to be conſidered, as we conſider the *declaration* of a *pardon* made by ſome great *prince* to an offending *ſubject*, which is only a declaration of *words*, that are heard only with our outward ears, and of a perſon that is entirely diſtinct from us.

God's pardoning a ſinner, or redeeming fallen man, has nothing like this in it. This declaration to *Adam*, and in him to all mankind, is not the declaration of a being that is *out of*, or ſeparate from us, but of a God in whom *we live and move, and have our being*; who is, the life of our life, the ſpirit of our ſpirit: his declaration therefore

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muſt ſignify ſome inward *change*, or new *ſtate* of our exiſtence in him, or that *he is* to us, and in us, that which *he was not* before he pardoned us.

When therefore God ſaid to *Adam* and *Eve*, *The ſeed of the woman ſhall bruiſe the head of the Serpent*, it had the ſame effect, as if he had ſaid, *Be ye henceforth in a ſtate of ſalvation, and let the redeeming conquering ſeed of the woman, from this time, begin to have power in you, and be in you, a ſtrength againſt the Serpent.* This declaration was not *ſolely* a promiſe of ſomething to come, but of ſomething then *inwardly* done and *given*, by a God inwardly preſent in him, and ſignified no leſs than God's *ſeeking* and *manifeſting* himſelf again to a creature, that had *loſt* him as his *God* and *only good*. And was the real *communication* of ſomething to

Adam, which made him *capable* of enjoying God as his *good*. Had not God at that time, done *inwardly* in the *depth* of his ſoul, ſomething like that which he did to the darkneſs of the deep, when he ſpoke light into it, *Adam* and *Eve*, and *all* their poſterity, had been inwardly meer *devils*, and outwardly mere *beaſts*.—For had not God thus in the beginning of the fall, before any man was born into the world of *Adam* and *Eve*, ſpoke pardon and redemption unto *Adam* and *Eve*; neither they, nor any of their poſterity had been *capable* of any *deſire* of God, but had lived as much without all *conſcience*, or *inſtinct* of goodneſs, as the beaſts of the earth and devils do.

Therefore God at that time, *communicated* to man, a *deſire*, a *capacity* to enjoy him as his *only good*, by ſowing into him a *ſeed* of the woman

man, a *ſpark* of life, an *inſtinct* of goodneſs, a *taſte* of heaven, a *principle* of holineſs, a *touch* of love, the *pearl* of the goſpel, the *pledge*, of immortality, the *hidden kingdom* of God.—All which expreſſions, are inſufficient to expreſs that *inward treaſure* of the ſoul, which God in the beginning of the redemption, or as his act of redemption, communicated to man.

And in this degree of redemption is every creature that is born of Adam; he has this kingdom of God in his ſoul, as a *grain* of *muſtard ſeed*, a *ſpark* of life, a *pledge*, of immortality, and *attraction* to God! If he *tramples* this *pearl* under his feet; then his deſtruction is from himſelf; but if he will cooperate with that *inward Redeemer* which God has put into his ſoul, if he will ſuffer his ſpark to *kindle*, his *inſtinct* of goodneſs to *ſpread* itſelf,

the light of life to *ariſe* in him, the voice of God to be *heard* in him; then will the *divine* life, be brought forth in him; and when his body dies, he will fall into all the fulneſs of God.

And now, my dear reader, how ſhall I touch your heart? Or how can your heart be untouched with this affecting view of the mercies of God in Chriſt Jeſus, and of the riches and treaſures which lie hid in your own ſoul, wanting nothing but your own conſent and good wiſhes to be manifeſted in you?

If you reject the *Saviour* offer'd to you in the goſpel, you reject *all that* which makes you differ from a *devil*; for that offered Saviour, is that very ſame *inward light of your mind*, which makes you now differ from a devil.

To refuſe him therefore that ſpeaketh to you in the goſpel, is rejecting

rejecting *all* that God has ever *tranſacted* with man; it is renouncing all that is *divine* and *good* within you; it is ſaying that you will have no benefit from the *good workings* or motions in your own heart; for Jeſus Chriſt that calls you to repentance in the goſpel, is the *very ſame* bleſſed Saviour, that *warns*, *reproves* and *preaches* repentance in the inmoſt eſſence of your ſpirit.

But, my friend, be wiſe in time, for this goodneſs will continue but for a time; and if you die rejecting the benefits of Chriſt, you will be without Chriſt, and you will find that all is gone with him, and that you will have nothing left, but that nature which is the torment of hell. If therefore you reject Chriſt in the utmoſt efforts of his goodneſs to ſave you, you will find that the renouncing of Chriſt, is renouncing all that you

have from him, and that nothing is left in that ſoul, where he is not, but mere darkneſs.

But, to return to my ſubject; what I have ſaid above of God's covenant with *Adam*, is God's covenant with all mankind, and therefore thus far all mankind are the redeemed of Jeſus. There is no partiality in God. As all *fell* and *died* in *Adam*, ſo all were *reſtored* in his reſtoration. Thus ſays the apoſtle, *As by the offence of one, judgment came upon all to condemnation*; EVEN SO BY *the righteouſneſs of one, the free gift came upon all men* UNTO JUSTIFICATION OF LIFE. Rom. v. 18. And the goſpel expreſsly ſaith, that Jeſus Chriſt is the *true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.* Therefore Jeſus Chriſt is in every man that cometh into the world, and every ſon of *Adam* has receiv-

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ed *that ſame* from Jeſus Chriſt, which Adam received from him, viz. An *inward light of life*, a *beginning* of his ſalvation, an actual *power* to reſiſt the ſerpent; and Jeſus Chriſt is, and ever was, the *free gift of God unto all men.*

HEATHENS, JEWS, and CHRISTIANS, differ only in this, that one and the ſame Saviour is *differently* made known to them.—The Heathens knew him not as he was manifeſted to the Jews, nor as he is glorioufly manifeſted in the goſpel; but they knew him as he was the God of their *hearts*, manifeſting himſelf by a *light* of the mind, by a *ſenſibility* of guilt, by *awakenings* and *warnings* of conſcience; and this was their goſpel, which they received as really in and by *Jeſus Chriſt*, as the law and goſpel were received thro' him. Therefore it is a great and glorious truth, enough to

to turn every voice into a trumpet, and make heaven and earth ring with praises and hallelujahs to God, that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of all the world, and of every man of every nation, kindred, and language. Therefore saith St. *John, They sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.* Rev. v. 9. And again, *After this, I beheld,* says he, *and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, cloathed with white robes, and with palms in their hands, and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.* Rev. vii. 9, 10.

Every

Every HEATHEN, JEW, and CHRISTIAN, is forced to know and feel, whether he will or no, that God has a certain *ſecret power* within him, which is watching every opportunity of ſaying ſomething to him, either of himſelf, the vanity of the world, or the guilt and conſequences of ſin. This is that inſtinct of goodneſs, attraction of God, or witneſs of himſelf in every man, which without arguments and reaſonings riſes up in the ſoul, and would be doing ſome good to it, if not quenched and reſiſted by the noiſe and hurry either of pleaſures or buſineſs.

Therefore, my dear friend, know the place of your religion, turn inwards, liſten to the voice of grace, the inſtinct of God that ſpeaks and moves within you; let your heart pray to God, to bring forth his own divine nature in you. Your heart wants

wants nothing but God, and nothing but your heart can receive him. This is the only place and ſeat of religion, and of all communication between God and you.

This *free gift* of God to all men, has that natural fitnefs for the receiving of Chriſt, as the eye has for receiving the light; it wants him, it deſires him, it is for him, it rejoices in him, as the eye wants, deſires, and rejoices in the light. And of this, does our Saviour plainly ſpeak, when he ſays, *He that is of God heareth God's word*, and again, *My ſheep hear my voice*.

The whole of natural religion conſiſts in a man's following this voice of nature, and acting conformable to it; in acknowledging the *ſinfulneſs* of his ſtate, and in *imploring* and *relying* upon the *divine mercy* to be delivered from it; tho' it is not known by what name to call

call that deliverance, or what kind of Saviour is wanted to effect it. But he that thus according to the direction of his natural ſtate lives before God, in *penitence*, and in *faith* in his mercy, is ſure of having the benefit of all the mercy of God, though he does not know the *method*, or the *means*, by which the mercy of God will ſave him.—Had a man no ſenſe of ſhame for his ſins, he would be in the very ſtate of the beaſts; had he no *faith* and *hope* in the *mercy* of God, he would be in the ſtate of the devils.

Therefore that internal *ſentiment* of *heart*, that *inſtinct* of goodneſs, is the *preſervation* of his nature, and the *ſaving* him from being like to the beaſts and fallen ſpirits. And all revealed religion, is to improve this true religion of nature in its two *eſſential parts*, penitence for ſin, and

and faith and truſt in the mercy of God. For all revealed religion, intends nothing, but to give us more reaſons for *penitence*, *faith* and *truſt* in the mercy of God.

And this inſtinct of good, or true religion of nature, is the *very preparation* of the heart for the reception of the goſpel. For ſo much as there is of this *penitence* and *faith* living in the ſoul, ſo much it has of eyes to ſee, of ears to hear, and of a heart to underſtand all the truths of divine revelation. The humility and penitence of the goſpel, the mercies of God in and through Jeſus Chriſt, are as agreeable to a man in this ſtate of heart, as food and water to the hungry and thirſty ſoul. And when he finds the goſpel, he finds the pearl, for which he gladly ſells all that he hath. Therefore there is the ſame agreement, and the ſame difference between

between the *true* religion of nature, and the religion of the goſpel, that there is between the breaking of the day, and the riſing of the ſun to its *meridian* height;—and as the light of the day-break, and the light of the noon-day, are both the ſame light, and from the ſame producer of light; ſo the light of the religion of nature, and the light of the goſpel, are the ſame light, and from the ſame producer of light in the mind.

Don't therefore, my dear friend, deceive yourſelf, nor let any one elſe deceive you. The matter is of infinite conſequence that you have before you. You come into the world but once, and have but one trial, but the effects of it are to laſt for ever. The time of diſputing and ſpeculating is ſhort; it can laſt no longer than whilſt the *ſun* of this world can refreſh your fleſh

and blood, and ſo keep the ſoul from knowing its own depth, or what has been growing in it. But when this is over, then you muſt know and feel what it is to have a nature as *deep*, and *ſtrong*, and *large* as eternity.

If you have lived upon the amuſements of *reaſon* and ſpeculation, your life has been worſe than a *dream*, and your ſoul will at the end of ſuch a life, be left to itſelf in its own *darkneſs*, *hunger*, *thirſt*, and *anxiety*, to be for ever devoured by its own fire.

But if you have watched over that *inſtinct* of *goodneſs* which God planted in your ſoul, and have exerciſed yourſelf in that *penitence* for your ſins, and humble *faith* in the *mercy* of God, that the goſpel propoſes to you; then when your body falls off from you, you will feel and know what a kingdom of God

God lay hid in your ſoul, you will ſee that you have a *life* and *ſtrength* like that of eternity, and the fulneſs of God himſelf will be your everlaſting enjoyment.

You are now your own *carver*, and muſt be *that* which you ſhall have made of yourſelf. If the depth of your heart has not in this life's time its proper cure, if it has not ſomething done to it, which your *reaſon* can no more do, than it can create the light, your heart will become your hell. And if you let the light of the goſpel ſhine into it, and revive the *good ſeed* of life in it, then it will become the ſeat and habitation of your heaven.

But it may be, you will ſay, you would believe the goſpel if you could, but that its evidence cannot have that effect upon your mind.—As the goſpel is much defended and oppoſed by learned

men, its evidence is ſo perplexed, that your mind cannot come at any certainty of what you ought to believe concerning the truth of it.

I will therefore propoſe the ſhorteſt, and the ſureſt of all methods.—Now I deſire you to know no books, nor to be well read in any controverſy but in that which paſſes within you, in order to know the goſpel to be the greateſt of all truths, and the infallible voice of God ſpeaking the way of ſalvation to you.

The goſpel is built on theſe *two pillars*, *firſt*, That you are a *fallen*: *ſecondly*, That you are a *redeemed* creature. Now every man's own ſoul, ſpeaks theſe two great truths to him. You *feel*, and *know* that you are a ſinner, that you have the diſorders of the beaſts, and the depravity of evil ſpirits within you.

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Is not this ſaying to you, by the *frame* and *voice* of your nature, that you are a *fallen* creature, and not in that ſtate in which a good being muſt have created you? For I appeal to yourſelf, in your own degree of goodneſs, if you could create your own children, whether you would not create them in a better ſtate, and with leſs evil, both of the beaſt and the devil in them; than that in which you was born yourſelf.

Therefore, only ſuppoſing God to have your degree of goodneſs, he could not have created the firſt man, from whom your nature is derived in the ſtate that you are; and therefore ſuppoſing him only to be good, you have a ſufficient proof; but ſuppoſing him to be infinitely good, or goodneſs itſelf, you have an infallible demonſtration written in the frame of your

nature, that you are a *fallen* creature, or not in that ſtate in which God created you.

Again, do you want any learning or books, to ſhew you, that every man, as well as yourſelf, affects to appear virtuous, to have good qualities, and is aſhamed of every beaſtly and diabolical diſorder; and would ſeem to have virtues and goodneſs, that he has not, becauſe of an innate love that he has for them; and from a ſenſe of their being proper for him? And is not this ſaying again with the ſame fulneſs of certainty, that you are a *redeemed* creature, that there is in you an *inward* Redeemer, a *light* of the mind, a *ſeed* of goodneſs, an *inſtinct* to virtue, given you by God, though without revelation you don't know *when* nor *how?* And do you not hereby plainly ſee, that you ſtand nearer

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to the truth of the Chriſtian religion, than you do to any thing elſe? It is the book of yourſelf, it talks of nothing *out* of you, it ſpeaks but that which is ſaid *within* you, and therefore you have a ſufficient help to underſtand it. What can the goſpel ſay to you of the fall of man, and of your redemption, that is not at the ſame time ſaid to you, by the ſtate of your own ſoul?

A ſinful creature, cannot come from God in its ſinful ſtate. And on the other hand, if you was not redeemed, how could you feel an inclination to goodneſs, and a deſire of appearing virtuous? For what elſe is this deſire, but a certain *inward* principle that has begun your *redemption*, and is trying to carry it on? Now the Chriſtian religion tells you only this great truth, that you are *fallen* and *redeemed*,

deemed, that is, that you have a mixture of *evil*, and *good* in you. That from the beginning of the world, it has been God's gracious deſire and deſign in and by Jeſus Chriſt, to render your redemption effectual, that is, to make the *good* that is in you perfectly overcome all your *evil*. Complain therefore no more of want of evidence; you are the goſpel's *evidence*, it is preached in your own boſom. And this great and glorious truth, that I have declared: this *free gift* of God to all men, by a ſeed of life, which all men receive from Chriſt, is the true and ſolid meaning of that which is called *preventing grace*, and which, when rightly ſpoken of, is ſaid to be common to all men. It is *grace*, becauſe it is God's *free gift*, we could not lay hold of it by any power of our own, nor had any right to claim it. It

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is *preventing grace*, becauſe it prevents or goes before, and is not given us for any thing that we have done. And therefore it has its plain diſtinction from God's aſſiſting grace.—St. *Paul* ſays, *God hath choſen us in Chriſt Jeſus, before the foundation of the world.* Now from this eternal, foreſeeing goodneſs of God towards mankind, it is, that a *ſpark* of the firſt divine life, called *a ſeed of the woman*, the *ingrafted* WORD, *a kingdom of God, a pearl of great price, a treaſure hid in a field*, was fore-ordained to be treaſured up;—which through the divine love, (my dear reader) is ſecurely treaſured up, as a pearl hidden in thy own field; which, if it be not thy own fault, ſhall ſurely revive into its firſt glory, through Chriſt, who is, and ever ſhall be, the RESURRECTION, and the

the LIFE.—This divine *ſeed*, or *free gift* of God, is the *general*, and *preventing grace* of all *men*, that enables them ſo to act, as to obtain God's *aſſiſting grace*, in the renewal of their hearts and minds; and it is a glorious and undeniable truth, that there is no *partiality* in God, but that *all* men, have a *general call*, and a *general capacity* to obtain their ſalvation.—God has but *one deſign* towards all mankind: CHRISTIANS, JEWS, and HEATHENS, are all *equally* the deſire of his heart,—his *wiſdom crieth, ſhe putteth forth her voice*, not here or there, but every where, in all the ſtreets of all the parts of the world.——O my God, juſt and good, how great is thy love and mercy to mankind, that heaven is thus every where open, and CHRIST thus the *common* Saviour of *all!* O ſweet power

power of the *bruiſer* of the ſerpent, born in every ſon of man, that ſtirs and works in every man, and gives every man a power, to find his happineſs in God! O holy JESUS, heavenly *light, that lighteſt every man that cometh into the world,* that redeemeſt every ſoul that follows thy light, which is *always within him!* O holy Trinity, immenſe ocean of divine love in which all mankind live, and move, and have their being! None are ſeparated from thee, none live out of thy love, but all are embraced in the arms of thy mercy, all are partakers of thy divine life, the operation of thy holy ſpirit, as ſoon as their heart is turned to thee! O plain, and eaſy, and ſimple way of ſalvation, wanting no ſubtilties of art or ſcience, no borrowed learning,

learning, no refinements of reaſon, but all done by the ſimple natural motion of every heart, that truly longs after God!

F I N I S.